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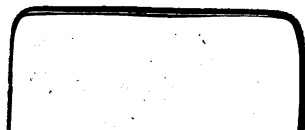
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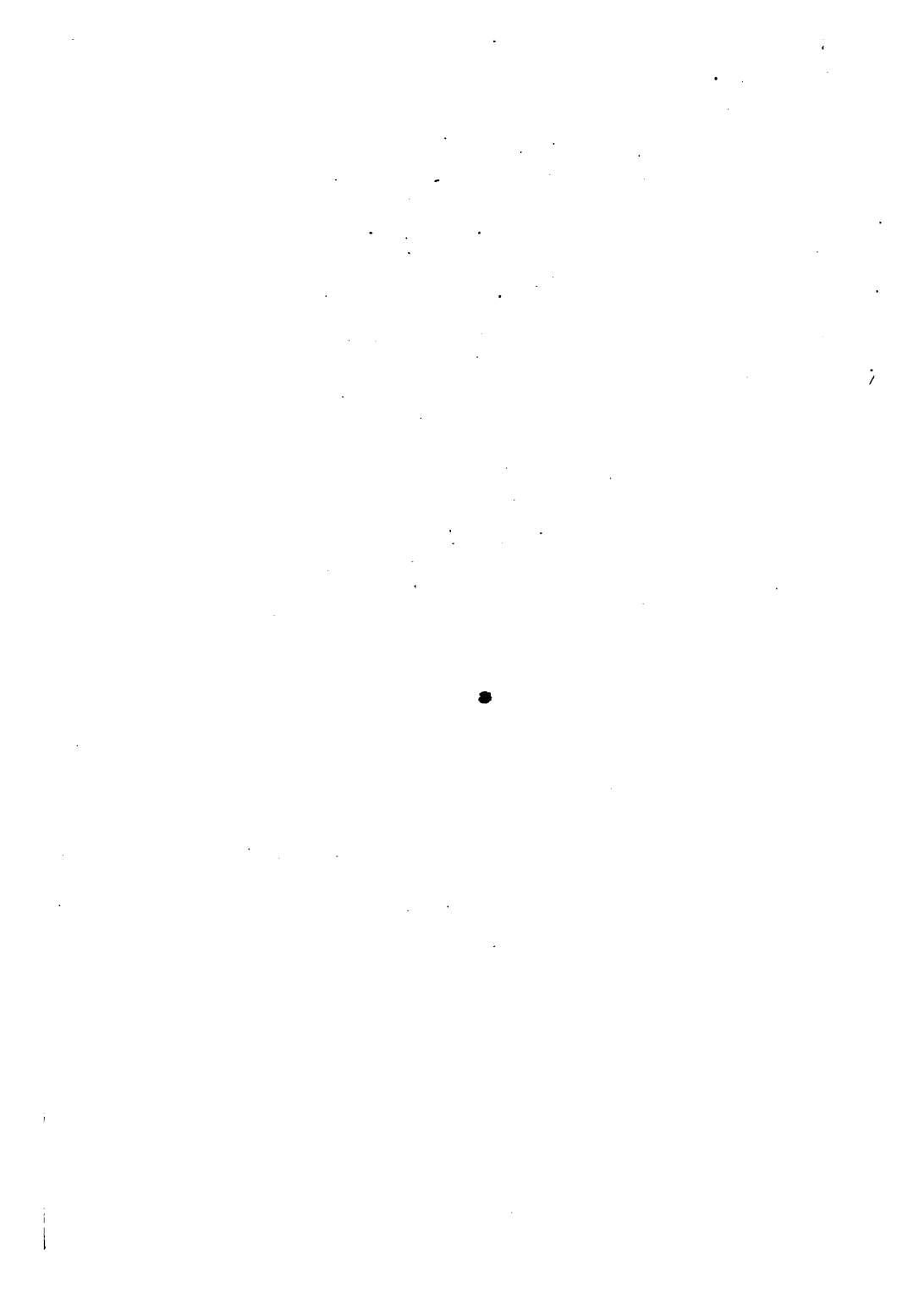
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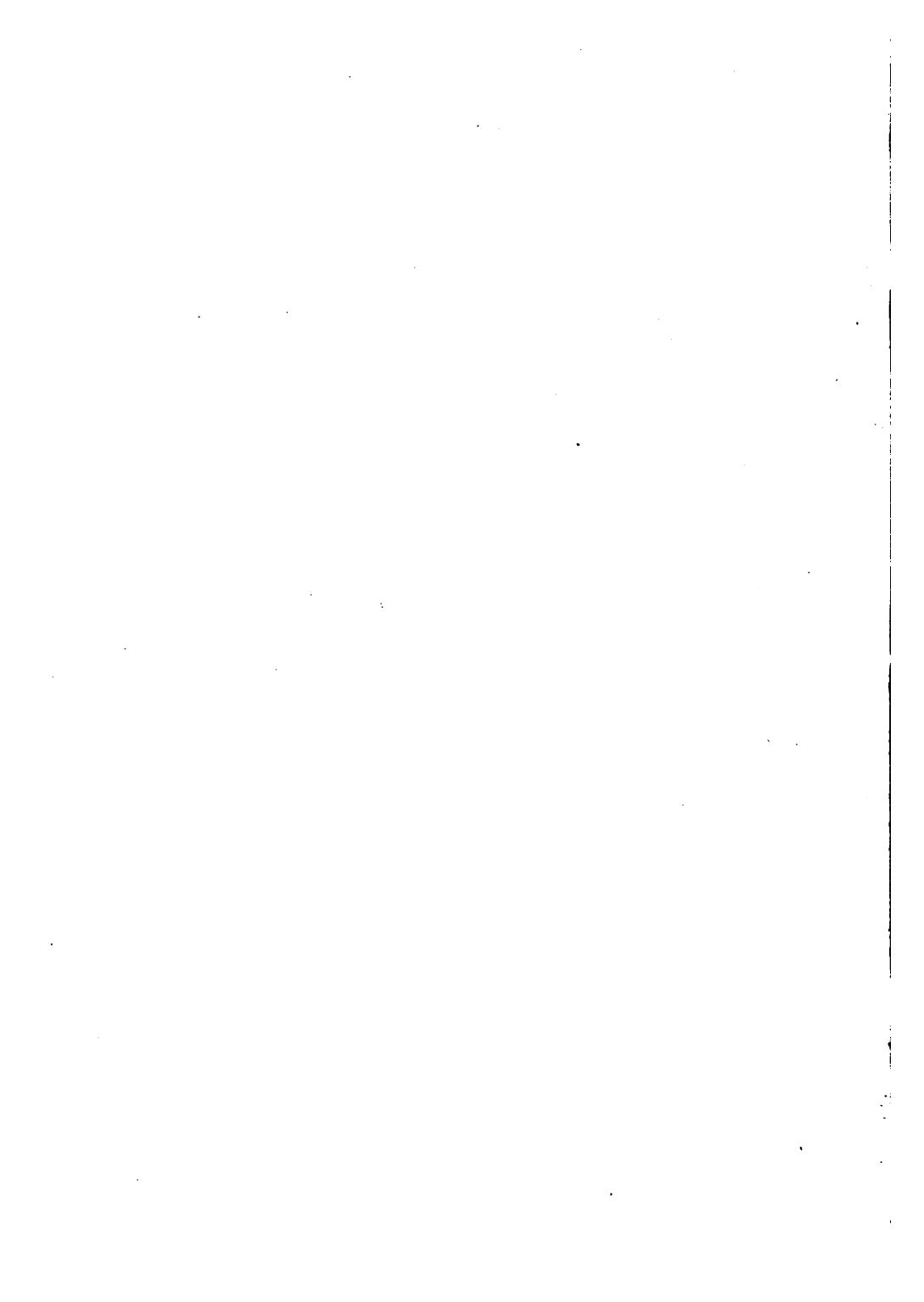
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NAS
Fitch



THE
KNIGHTING OF THE TWINS



The Knighting of the Twins.

and ten other tales.

By
Clyde Fitch.



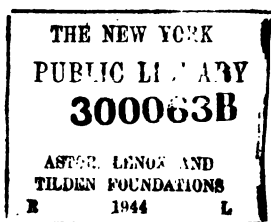
And as I maie I speke among,
And otherwhile I synge a songe.

Gower's Confessions.

The drawings by
Virginia Gerson.

Boston.
Roberts Brothers.

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1172



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THE ELEVEN TALES.

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Little - 15 December, 1904



THE KNIGHTING OF THE TWINS.

BUSHEY, HERTS., September, 1889.

TO

THE MEMORY OF WILLIAM M. H. D'URBAN.

AND Death seems not the same that once it did,
For I shall follow his dear footsteps there ;
And they have always lead me only where
The Truth and Beauty were divinely hid.

1890.



THE KNIGHTING OF THE TWINS.



HE twins said that really it was the thanksgivingest Thanksgiving we'd ever had. Everybody in the house was thankful; even Rachel. Before I go any farther I must tell you that Rachel is the dog,—a dear, long and narrow, knock-kneed dog, with very long ears; and she comes next in the twins' affections to Aunt Sue. First come mother and father, and then Bridget the cook, and then Aunt

Sue, and then Rachel. And I must tell you, too, why we call her Rachel. Probably you won't like the name; none of us do, exactly. It's the sentiment of it that we like.

I know this is what Howard calls a digression. He always accuses me in my writing of 'making digressions and things. He thinks I can't write at all; he says I've no style. Now, I know I do digress, but I just can't help it; and is n't it nicer to digress and tell something than not to digress, and so leave you ignorant of a thing important or pleasant to know? And really, I don't think I'd like to write as he does. He always begins some such way as, "It was a summer afternoon in July, and the sun was shining down on the grass. Thomas Jones transgressed the lot adjoining his

parents, and accosted his comrade whom he found there unexpectedly, eating melons, where he said he would be." This is exact, I know, because I copied it out of Howard's book. He says that's a literary style; so I suppose I must be old fashioned. I don't know that I mind, but I would n't tell him so.

Well, to go back to Rachel; this is why we called her that: It was the twins' idea. You see, when she first came to us she had to lose all her children, and she had quite a few then; they were taken away and none of us ever knew what became of them. Howard said probably they had been sold into bondage; but, however that was, their mother went about for weeks crying and whining and moping, and we could n't do anything with her. Some one said she was like

Rachel, weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted because they were not; and that suggested their idea to the twins.

Rachel did not seem to grow reconciled until one day she found an old toy that Ethel had grown tired of, — a cloth animal, sort of like an elephant and sort of like a cow. Then the strangest thing happened. She adopted this as her own child, and carried it about with her everywhere, and saved it bits from her own meals, and put it in the nicest place in front of the wood-fire winters, and would not go to sleep at night without it cuddled up in her box with her. In fact, she mothered it for several years, as if it were a real puppy of her own, which never grew up or was able to take care of itself, like a sickly child, or one that was queer. We called it Moses because it was adopted.

This was the twins' idea also ; they spent half a day hunting it out.

It was Friday morning, two weeks before Thanksgiving, that mother did not come down-stairs, and that Aunt Sue arrived suddenly in the most unexpected manner. We were told to be very quiet, and not get in anybody's way, and not to ask why, but just to wait and see. The hardest of all was the not to ask why, especially as we could n't tell how long we would have to wait. Howard said mother probably had some surprise for us, and that girls must n't be curious, — just as if boys were n't. But he was right, for it was a surprise. Father came and told us ; and in the evening we were allowed to go in and see it by turns, one at a time. It was a wee, tiny, baby girl ; and, oh, mother said I might name it !

To be perfectly truthful, we all decided that night, out in the entry, that we did n't any of us like it. But we would n't tell mother so; we did n't want to hurt her feelings. And then about the third time we saw it it was n't so pink, and looked more natural, and we all thought it lovely. Of course, those first few days we had to be quiet and not bother any one, while mother stayed up-stairs with the new one of us. The twins, who are the most conspicuous of the family, Aunt Sue told especially to "behave," or they would be punished. Mother does n't believe in punishing, but Aunt Sue does, — at least in talking about it, though I never knew her really to punish any one.

Well, the twins were wonderfully quiet. No one knew even where they were; but Aunt Sue did n't know their ways suffi-

ciently to be suspicious. One morning we noticed Rachel going about all over the house and crying. We could not make out what the matter was, until at last we discovered that Moses had disappeared. We hunted, but we could not find him high or low. I remembered afterward that the twins did not help us look at the time, and had nothing to say; but everything had been so exciting I had n't paid any attention to them.

That was Saturday; and for four days poor Rachel went round the house so sad it almost broke our hearts to see her. Wednesday morning we began to notice the twins. They clung to each other more than ever, and moped about almost as mournful as Rachel. They did n't talk at all (conversation usually was one of the twins' great points, as father used

to say), but often sat in the same chair together, and always watched Rachel with such big eyes! Aunt Sue said their stomachs must be out of order, and made them take some medicine from her little chest. I began to wonder if they had n't something to do with the disappearance of Moses, but before I had decided how to find it out, mother, up-stairs in her own room, had thought of the same thing, and planned a way to know.

It seemed that the twins were jealous of the new baby, whom I had decided to call Rosemary, and mother and father agreed. You see they'd used up the family names pretty well on the rest of us. Now, mother knew how fond the twins were of the "History of the Feudal Times," with their knights and tournaments, and all that (their favorite book

being Miss Yonge's "Dove in the Eagle's Nest"), so on Wednesday — the day before Thanksgiving — she sent word for them to come up into her room by themselves. There she told them that she wanted to knight them, and give into their especial keeping the safety and happiness of little Rosemary, for them to guard always from danger and harm, and be her true and valiant little knights. She said she would go through a short ceremony with them then, unless they knew of some reason why they were unworthy. She told them a knight must always be a brave man with a gentle heart, who would never tell a lie or do a cruel thing; and just as she finished, Rachel scratched against the door and whined to be let in. It was too much for the twins. They felt they were unworthy to be Rosemary's knights, and they could

not keep the tears back. They took hold of hands and fell down on their knees in front of mother, and cried, and said, "Oh, Mother! Mother! we are so sorry, but we have drowned Moses!"

Mother did not stop to correct their pronunciation. "What do you mean?" she asked. Then they told her.

When Rosemary came they were jealous, because they thought mother might love her better than she did them. They felt there were enough in the family already, and they decided to make it smaller; besides, they resolved to have vengeance on somebody, and be very wicked. But as they did n't wish to hurt any one, they kidnapped Moses, not dreaming how badly Rachel would feel; and they had tied a heavy stone to him, and put a wreath of dried immortelles around his neck, and

had drowned him in the pond at the foot of the garden. They said they had been miserable ever since. They had had such guilty consciences they could not be happy, and had not dared to look any one straight in the face with their awful secret; and they had been ashamed to tell what they had done. They would rather be knights, they said, than anything else in the world; but they knew they were not good enough, and they felt better now for having told it all, although they did have to remain just twins.

Mother answered that she certainly could not knight them then, but she would think it over; and if they were honestly sorry, she might find them worthy of knighthood the next day. She told them, of course, that brave men were never cruel to animals, nor were real

knights — knights of truth and love — afraid to confess when they did wrong; and that nothing but wrong had ever come of being jealous. Then she said they might think over what she had told them, and if in the morning they were agreed to undertake to be true knights, and were anxious to be all that meant, she would see about giving them their knighthood.

The twins went off to their own room and refused to come out the rest of the evening. They asked to have bread and water and one piece of cake sent them by Jane, and they told her to tell the family they were in “durance vile.”

Very early the next morning, before any one else was up, the twins had dressed and let themselves out of the house into the garden. They took the long kitchen poker and went down to the pond. They were

preparing to assume the duties of knight-hood, and first they were going to make reparation to Rachel. They had heard of resuscitation of the drowned, and they determined to resuscitate Moses if possible. They fished ever so long without any success, but they knew if they wanted to be knights they must have patience; and finally their efforts and poker were crowned by what was evidently Moses. He was somewhat changed, for it was a muddy pond; but they did not despair on that account, for Bridget had promised to help them, on the consideration that, when they were knights, they would be her knights, too, and they felt they could manage both Bridget and Rosemary.

During breakfast these two children were so very mysterious, and so much brighter

than they had been for the last few days, that every one noticed it; and Aunt Sue said her medicine had done them good. Rachel was lying in front of the fire, still quite wretched. She would n't eat, and even father was worried about her. When breakfast was over the twins let me into the secret, and I promised to see that Rachel went up-stairs when we all did. Mother was coming down to dinner for the first time that day, but first we were all going to see her together. When we were there, all except the twins, they marched in with Moses, quite dry on the outside, and very clean and nice. Rachel gave one yelp of joy, and then jumped up and seized her child. She rolled over and over again with it on the floor, making little glad sounds all the time. She would

put it down, and stand and look at it with her head on one side, and then give a sharp bark and pounce upon it in an ecstasy of happiness; and finally she tore two or three times around the room with it in her mouth, stopped for a moment in front of mother, as if to show it and say, "See, I, too, have a babe; you are a mother, you will know how to sympathize with me. My lost darling is found." And then she rushed out of the room down-stairs. Actually, I was choky.

"Rachel is having her Thanksgiving," said father, "as well as we."

The twins were standing in front of mother, who sat in her big chair with Rosemary in her lap.

"Lady mother," one began, "we want to be Rosemary's knights, and we will try very hard to be brave, and kind, and truth-

ful. We will protect her with our life's blood, by our habadeens ; we will wear her colors when we ride for the tourney prize ; and if ever we are bad, we will own up just as soon as we can."

"Amen," said the other twin, who had n't been speaking.

"Come on, it's time to kneel," said the orator.

They knelt down on their right knees, putting their little hands on their hearts, just like a picture in our "Young Folks' History of England." Not one of us smiled, and Ethel was so astonished and overcome that she forgot herself, and tumbled right off her high chair ; but I caught her, fortunately. Mother explained in a few words that she was going to make the twins Rosemary's knights. They were going to take her under their

especial protection, to care for and watch over her. She said we were all to stay and take part in the ceremony.

The twins looked very earnest and rather pale. First, mother put her dear, thin white hands on the two boys' heads and closed her eyes. Somehow or other we all knelt. Then mother said, "God, the divine knight of all people, give these thy two young servants the true spirit of chivalry; that under thy banner they may fight against the little and big sins of this life until they lay down their arms at the threshold of everlasting peace. Amen."

We all said amen, excepting Ethel; she was just too astonished to say anything, and sat with her mouth wide open.

Next, mother put one of Rosemary's tiny hands into one of each of the twins', and let

them kiss the baby on both cheeks. After that mother gave them two knots of pale green ribbon, Rosemary's color, and kissed them both on the forehead, and said, "I salute the royal knights of the little Lady Rosemary." And they were knighted.

We were all quite still for a few moments, looking at mother, who bent her head down over Rosemary to hide her eyes, which I could see were wet. And Howard whispered to me, "I'll tell you what, I am going to be your knight." I did think it was so kind of him; for it's nice to have a knight, even if there is n't anything for him to do.

When we were all seated in the pew in church to hear the Thanksgiving sermon, I noticed Aunt Sue looking astonished toward the 'twins' end; and there, between the two new knights, sat Rachel

with Moses. She kept perfectly quiet all through the services, and looked so serious, it seemed as if she must know what was going on, and was giving thanks too. On the way home Aunt Sue picked out the twins, and asked what in the world they meant by taking the dog to church.

The twins answered, "Well, you see, we felt we could n't do enough for Rachel today, and we knew how thankful she must feel; and really, Aunt Sue, she behaved as well as most people during the sermon."

"Yes; and understood as much of it as most of us, I don't doubt," said Aunt Sue.

Almost as soon as we were back mother came down-stairs. She was dressed in pale green, with soft white stuff fluffy all

down the front, and she held Rosemary in her arms. The twins went and stood one on each side of her, — how sweet mother's smile is, — and the rest of us children joined hands in a circle around them.



ABOUT JACK.

AMHERST, MASS., June, 1887.

TO

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

You praised this story when you heard,
With sweetest words from friendship's mint;
Its *unbound* heart with pride was stirred,
And, brave with joy, burst into print!



ABOUT JACK.



TO begin with, we were getting ready to go to the seashore for a month.

Arrangements had been made for the whole family, including grandma and Don. Don is our dog; he used to belong to Robert, and grandma — but grandma is, of course, just grandma. It isn't easy for us to get off all together. There are so many of us, and we come so close together, — "so unexpectedly close," father says, sometimes when he's worried. Grandma says

there's always a good side to everything, and our clothes fit without even being made over; and then there are no twins, — which we don't think a good side at all, for Howard and I have always been disappointed that we were n't twins. He blames me because I was born too soon, but I say it is his fault for not being born soon enough. And as for our clothes — well! there's no use talking about them; but if *you* had to wear a dress your older sister wore last year, and had to be careful to leave enough of it for the one next to you, you would know how dreadful it is. However, Grandma always did see a good side to everything.

At last we found a boarding-house that would take children, including babies, and give grandma a room fronting the south, with a window on the east. The prices

were as low, father said, as could be expected "by a man with seven children all of the same age." Father is always teasing and making fun about us, yet he seems all the fonder of us for it. Indeed, he isn't yet used to Rob's being gone, although mother never leaves the room now when we talk of him, and has taught us not to wish him back again.

This did seem a very nice sort of a boarding-house. They didn't have mosquitoes; father said, "Oh, no, boarding-houses never do!" and it was only ten minutes walk from a good bathing beach. Grandma was afraid some of us would be drowned. Tom and Ethel were wild over the wrecks that would be washed up; and Jack saved two weeks' pin money to buy a shovel, with which, he confided to me, after making me cross my heart I'd keep

it secret, he was going to dig after Captain Kidd's treasure.

We had a busy time getting ready. Mother said at the beginning it was no use thinking of making bathing suits for us all; we would make four, and half of us could go in one day and half the next. And grandma saw the good in it right away, and said it "was n't healthy" to go into the salt water too often.

Besides, we had a few new clothes to buy, and there were buttons, and buttons, and buttons to be sewed on. There were hats to be fixed up, the silver (wedding presents, all of it, except Jack's mug and bowl, for he was named after a rich relative, the only one we've got) to be put away, and finally Bridget to be gotten off. Mother said it hardly seemed as if it would pay, sometimes, she did get so

tired and worried; and I didn't blame her, especially over Bridget. You see Bridget was determined to go with us; and then to stay and look after the house. It was very hard to persuade her to go and stay with her sister at Garrison's, but finally father did.

Then, one day late in the afternoon, the train landed all of us in Bayport, very dusty and very tired, and father pretty worried. We had left Don the last place we changed cars, and Jack had wept most of the time since because the engine wouldn't turn round and go back after him. Jack is so funny, and you can't reason with him.

When we reached the boarding-house, we found the landlady had expected only six children, instead of seven; but she promised to put up a cot in one of the

rooms and make it all right. As we went up the steps a lady on the piazza said, "Good gracious, look at the children!" which made father laugh; and Jack, who heard her, turned around and said in his sweet way, "There are seven of us, which is not counting Rob; but there are no twins." He knew how disappointed Howard and I were.

The rooms did very well; Mary went in with grandma, and I had the younger children in charge in the one next. The boys were near father and mother up-stairs. I always have charge of the younger ones. They call me Sister, although Mary is older than I; but Mary is pretty and I am not (I have red hair and a very bad nose), and she plays on the piano. I can't play anything but scales, and even then I can't quite manage my thumbs. Mary has

gentlemen callers, too ; but I always liked to be about the house and help mother. I suppose that's the reason they came to me as they did, when it happened ; for something happened, and of course it was Jack. Why, when people ask about us, they always say, "How's Jack, and the rest of the children ?" and it was the same way this time.

We were at the breakfast table the first morning, and the landlady said, "I thought there were seven children, Mrs. Edgeworth, but there are only five here." I supposed there were six down, all except Mary, whom we never waited for. I had left her up-stairs when I came down, "doing her hair." Sometimes I'm glad I've got red hair, — dear mother calls it auburn, but I might as well own up it is just honest red, — because it does n't seem

to make any difference how you "do it;" and if I had hair like Mary's I suppose I'd take just as long as she in the morning, though I hope not. But, besides Mary not being down, Jack was not there. Father sent Tom up-stairs, and he came back quite frightened, and said Jack's cot had n't been slept in. The boys did n't notice last night he was not there, or if they did they must have supposed him in one of the other rooms, on account of the landlady's mistake. Mother said he came in and kissed her good-night, and got his shovel out of the trunk at about eight o'clock. Right away I had a suspicion, — he had gone down to the beach for that Kidd treasure; but why had n't he come back? Just then Mary came into the room. She had her hair done up high to wear with her new shade hat, and had a

veil to put over her complexion. She said she found this note pinned on my door as she passed. I had n't noticed it. It was from Jack. I read it aloud :—

Dere Margy ime gone to hunt for Kaptin Kid's trezure by munelite. It's the best tim his spirut is sed to huver over the place I shall konjeal myself in that bote on the shore and keep my eys open don't forget yore oth to keep mum. I shall be hom for brekfus. JACK.

We all laughed and felt easier; of course he had overslept in the boat. Father and Tom had already started for the beach, and they would find him. Mary was so nervous she could n't eat any breakfast; and she and mother went to meet father, while I took grandma's breakfast up to her. I had gotten all my things unpacked, and most of Mary's, when Tom burst into my room, and said

right out, "Margy go to mother; Jack's drowned."

I just fell right down, with my head in the trunk. I felt as if I had died, or was going to; and I should have been very weak and selfish if the lid of the trunk had n't fallen on me, which made me get up and remember mother.

She was in her room by the window, facing the sea, and in her lap was Jack's hat, all wet and draggled. She did not stir, she did not look at me, but sat there like the women in that poem, "Three fishers went sailing out into the west." I could n't speak to her then. I ran out and caught Tom by the arm, in the hall, and pinched him hard, and cried, "Tell me, tell me." He said the tide had been unusually high, and the boat had not been fastened, and -- well -- the boat was gone,

and that was all there was to tell, except that the hat had been picked up somewhere on the beach. Tom's voice was very choky, but he did n't cry; he thinks it is n't manly. I don't see why, when there's such trouble. I told Tom not to tell grandma yet, and then I went back to mother. She still sat by the window, with her eyes wide open, facing the sea. Somehow or other I wanted her to cry. I sat down at her feet, with my head against her knees, and cried myself, — I could n't keep in any longer; and she put her hand on my head, but that was all.

After a while I began to think. I did n't believe he was drowned. The boat had just floated off, and it would float back or be brought back by a steamer or something. I was sure of it. And so I began to talk, and told mother how

many ways there were to save him, and how foolish it was to believe he was drowned, yet. The hat did n't mean anything; and by and by I managed to get that away from her, and I hid it under the chair. It was n't like mother to give way so; but I suppose she was worn out with getting ready to go away, and that was why.

Anyway, at last she spoke to me, called me "her daughter" (now, I love that; she never calls Mary anything but Mary); and she cried a little too, and said she felt better. I often wonder why a good cry makes you feel better, especially if you've been unchristian and spiteful. And there we sat together at the window, looking out.

Two boats, she said, had gone out, father in one of them. We sat there

whole hours, mother and I, and I never was so sad and so happy at the same time in my life. I pretended he was surely coming back, and before long. Every time I spoke of him I said, "When he comes back;" and mother helped and did the same way, till by and by I felt as if he really were and mother felt so too, for she began to wonder if she ought to punish him. She did n't see how she could, and I said I did n't think she ought, for it never did any good anyway; and I laughed, and said perhaps he'd come home with a treasure, and just then mother started and leaned out of the window.

"Margy," she screamed, "look!" She stood up, but she trembled so she had to hold on to me; and there, sure enough,

coming from the beach, was Jack, father on one side of him, a fisherman on the other, and the boys running all about him. Don had turned up too, and was walking solemnly behind. Mother ran down the stairs, and I after her, only stopping to tell Mary to come, and why.

"This good fisherman has found our 'Kid,'" shouted father.

"But we ain't found no treasure," said the fisherman, as they came near. But Jack screamed, as mother hugged him tight in her arms, "Yes, you have, because I'm mother's 'little treasure.'"

No one could have punished him after that; and besides he had been punished enough, for he had waked up and found himself off on the water in the boat. He had gotten in when it was way up on the

beach, and was so tired he forgot to keep his eyes open. He said he forgot all about the treasure when he was out on the ocean, and he did n't believe he would ever hunt for it again, the waves were so very big, and made him feel so much "littler" than ever. "Out, there," he did not dare think of father and mother and sister and the others; he just knelt down in the boat and said, "Now I lay me," over and over and over again. He did n't want to go to sleep of course; but it was the only prayer he could think of.

The fisherman had found him among the shoals by the second beach.

Jack kept near mother all the day; he seemed to realize how dreadfully he had made her feel. And that night Howard and I, coming up from a walk on the beach, heard mother singing the same

sweet songs she sang to all the children when we were babies ; and looking up, by the moonlight we saw her with Jack in the big chair by the window, his two arms about her neck.



MOTHER'S CHILDREN.

NEW YORK, November, 1886.

TO

LYMAN ABBOTT.

THIS is the corn from which my small oaks grew;
This my first tale, which you were sponsor to ;
And, surely, " Mother's Children " never knew
A greater, gentler heart than rests in you.



MOTHER'S CHILDREN.



YOU see, we knew it would be a sad Christmas for mother and father. For that matter, it would be sad for us, too ; but then we were young, — at least, that was what most every one said, as if it made a difference ; so we supposed it must. We were surprised, when we counted, to find how short a time it was since Dick had left us, — it did seem so very long. We always say Dick has gone away ; it

sounds too cruel to say our dear old Dick is dead. Not that he was really old, for he was the youngest, and the pet of the family. Mother always called him "her baby," and father "his boy." Arthur used to say he did n't see where we came in, unless we were father's baby and mother's boy, which always made me laugh, it was so absurd.

We did find out what we were. It was that dreadful day when we had come back from the churchyard, and the house was, oh, how still and lonely! and in the library, where we were, Dick's little chair in the corner made me feel as if the whole world had been emptied out, and I was in it alone. Mother came in looking so sad, with her eyes full of tears, — she who had been so brave through it all, — and Arthur and I went up and put our arms

about her. She held us close to her and kissed us both, and said, "My children, my children!" I had what Arthur calls an Adam's apple in my throat, and could not speak a word; but he said, "Yes, Mother, that is what we are, — your children; and we will never leave you, or be anything but your children," while I laid my cheek against hers, and squeezed her hand, to show her I meant it too.

We had had such a dear Christmas last year, though Dick was quite ill for a part of the day from eating two whole candy apples whose cheeks were painted a most beautiful red. Mother had told him not to eat them, but he forgot that until they were both eaten. I remember so plainly how he sang in church the night before, — 't was just like an angel;

even Aunt Clarissa spoke of it, and she never praises any one.

Dick had been gone now ever since spring, and, as I said, we knew this Christmas would be very sad for dear mother and father ; so Arthur and I went into the play-room one day after lessons and held a meeting, to decide what "mother's children" should do to make it brighter. Arthur is so funny! He said we must behave legally, and the proper way to do was to resolve ourselves into a committee of the whole. I did n't know what that was, but was willing if it would not be too much trouble ; and it proved no trouble at all, for you only had to say you were so, and there you were. I told Arthur he must have made some mistake, for this was just like when I used to pretend I was Queen Eliza-

beth in one of mother's wrappers, with my hair rolled up, and a napkin ring on it for a crown, giving a (penny) ring to the Earl of Leicester, which was Arthur in my cape and grandfather's sword; but Arthur said there was no pretence about it, and it was just like a girl for me to think so. I don't know what I should be like if it isn't a girl. Arthur seems to forget there's anything besides boys. Well, after we had become a committee of the whole, Arthur appointed me vice-president and secretary, and that left president and treasurer for him. I wanted to be treasurer very much; but I didn't say anything, for I saw Arthur wanted it, too. Still, I didn't see what there would be for me to do, but Arthur told me there was enough for a girl. When he saw how disappointed I was, though, he did say if

I would request his resignation he would give up the office; but of course I did n't want to do anything like that. Then we talked over plans, and every time I had an idea, something very nice, Arthur would have one, too, and call me to order, and say the president had the floor, which meant he was to tell his idea first. I did get so discouraged!

We decided, besides being very good, and not going off by ourselves that day, we must begin by having a grand surprise. We must give both father and mother a lovely present without their suspecting it. The only trouble was how to get it. We both had our banks where we'd been saving up for Christmas; but if we gave all we had in them to mother and father, instead of giving to Bridget and Jane and our "poors,"

which we always did, they would not be pleased at all, we knew. So Arthur said the committee of the whole would retire and draw up a plan to present to the president; but as the play-room was the only place we would n't be interrupted in, we only pretended to retire. And all of a sudden I had a splendid idea. I watched Arthur till I made sure he had no idea to call me to order for, and then I told him. It was this: first, we would go to father, make him promise on his honor he would not tell, and then ask him, instead of giving us a Christmas present, to give each of us the money, so we could get something for mother; and, next, go to mother and do the same with her. With all that money we could get both a beautiful present. We knew what father would probably give us, — we

always did; mother was the one who surprised us. We used to tell father right out what we wanted. Arthur was going to ask for a bicycle, and I had made up my mind for a willow rocking-chair, — a little one with light-blue ribbon bows, to have all for myself in my own room. I did hate to give up my chair, but I knew it was selfish to feel that way; and mother always told me selfish people were unhappy, so I determined I would not be selfish and unhappy. And I pretended that if I had gotten the chair it would have been uncomfortable, and have broken down with me the first time I sat in it.

Arthur thought my plan a good one; though he did want a bicycle very much, he wanted still more to help mother and father. It made me feel better to have

him own up about the bicycle, because I had felt the same way about my chair; and I told him what a disappointment that would have turned out if I had asked for it, and advised him to pretend he'd have taken a "header" off the bicycle the second time he mounted it, so he could n't ride for months,— I thought it would help him a great deal. But he only told me I was just like a girl, which I am getting used to now, and don't mind so much. When we had made up our minds to give up our presents, we both said we had not dreamed it would be so easy. We were so happy over our plan that, after all, we were glad to have this way instead of any other,— it seemed more like mother's way.

That was all we could do that day, so

Arthur declared the committee honorably discharged, and the meeting adjourned *sine die*. Ever since he had begun reading Cæsar he had been very proud of his Latin; but even I knew enough to know *sine die* was wrong, because we had to meet the next day, there was so little time before Christmas. I told Arthur, and he said we could meet all the same, only that was the proper way for closing the meeting.

The next morning we met again. I had been trying to think for an hour, hemming some napkins for mother, what we should get for her present. I was to think of mother's, and Arthur of father's. I could not decide between a sealskin cloak and a piece of statuary for the drawing-room. I thought mother really ought to have the cloak, for she always

went out, no matter how stormy or cold it was, if there was a poor person to visit, or any one in trouble who needed her; but I knew it must cost a very great deal. For that matter, I was afraid a piece of statuary would, too; but I knew mother was very fond of statuary, for I had heard her say so often. Arthur had only thought of a set of books for father, and said I would have to give up both the sealskin cloak and the statuary for mother, for both would cost more than we could spend. That only made me all the more anxious to get them; but if we did not have enough money, of course we would have to give them up. It was hard work thinking of something else. Arthur proposed getting mother a party dress, though he knows she never goes to parties, except little teas

or dinners, or something like that; and I told him I guessed a party dress would cost as much as the statuary. He said we could get one ready-made, and ready-made clothes were always cheaper; but after a while he acknowledged that clothes would be horrid. Then I had such an idea.

"Arthur," I cried, "a picture of Dick!"

"The very thing," he said. "Elsie, you're a trump. A water-color head."

"A large one, in a frame!"

"Yes; and we'll go and see Mr. Lorne about it." Mr. Lorne was an artist friend of ours, and would tell us, we knew, who would do it the best.

Father consented to the plan for mother's sake, and mother did, thinking it would cheer up father; and both promised to be as secret as possible. Of

course we did not tell either what the present was, for we had decided we would have to give the picture to both together. We had such a time deciding how to give it! I said, give the picture to mother and the frame to father,—the picture to mother because she always called Dick *her baby*; but Arthur said father always called him *his boy*, so why not give the picture to father? And finally we settled it that the best way was to give it, all framed, to both.

Mr. Lorne found out for us just the right person to make the picture, and helped us choose the frame. We had a sweet photograph of Dick in his chorister's robe, to have copied; and we ordered a broad, dull silver frame with a bar of music from Mendelssohn's "Songs

without Words" across the top. It was very hard to keep the secret, only I knew all the surprise would be gone if I told; and then I would n't, anyway, because Arthur said I would.

Christmas Eve the picture came; we smuggled it up-stairs into my closet, and hung my best dress over it so no one could see it. Arthur and I were so happy, and did feel so mysterious. When I went up-stairs to get my hat and cloak to go to church, he actually caught me in his arms and kissed me, though he hardly ever does. We all went to church together. It looked beautiful, with its ropes of green winding round the big white pillars, and the wreaths on the gallery railing, and over the chancel, in letters of holly, the "Peace on earth, good-will toward men."

We had become used to not seeing Dick amongst the choristers; but somehow to-night all the old feeling came back when I heard the faint "Amen" to the prayer away off in the robing-room, and then the sweet, distant music growing louder, until up in front of the chancel they came, led on and urged on by the organ, —

"On—ward—Chris—tian—sol—diers—
March—ing—as—to—war—"

I felt as if I could not stand it; as if I *must* see Dick there at the head of the boys, and hear his voice as it always came out high and sweet above the others, on —

"With—the cross—of—Jcsus,"

and then dropping again, —

"Go—ing—on—before."

Looking up, I saw the old look of pain coming over the dear mother's face, and I was ashamed to think how, on this night of all nights, I was forgetting to help. I shut my eyes, for I knew the words as well as Dick had known them, and I just *thought* down the tears, and slipping my hand into mother's as we stood up, I sang too.

I forgot Dick was gone; I saw him in the choir, just as he looked in the picture, only he was singing, singing with me! It seemed as if I could hear his voice sweeter than all the others; and I sang, and forgot everything, — forgot the church, and everybody about me, everything except Dick!

"Glo—ry—laud—and—hon—or"

It seemed as if angels were waving the
"Peace on earth, good-will toward men."

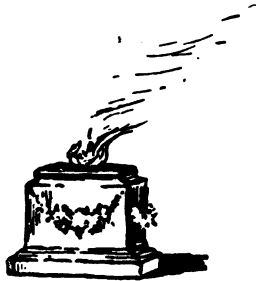
Then, with another "Amen," the music stopped and service began, and brought me back from I did not know where. I still had hold of mother's hand, and she was looking at me in a strange sort of way, and there were tears in her eyes, but she smiled; and, besides, the tired, pained look in her face was gone.

When we came down-stairs Christmas morning, Arthur and I took father and mother to the door of father's study, where we had put Dick's picture, so that it would be the first thing you saw as you went into the room. Arthur had a little speech, which he had written out and learned, to make before we went in; it was really very good, just like the big speeches in the newspapers, and began, "Ladies and gentlemen;" but

he forgot it right in the middle, and ended with just telling our plan, and why we did it. Then we all went in. Mother started and cried, "Oh!" but father didn't say one word; he just looked around at Arthur and me, and then put his arm about mother, and, going nearer, they stood looking at the picture together. I cried, — I could not help it, — and Arthur turned his back, till mother called us, and took us in her arms as she had done that dreadful day in the spring, saying again, "My children, my children!" — only there was a difference. Father was wiping his glasses; but when he had finished, he kissed us both, and said, "God bless you, my dears!"

And that day was one of the happiest Arthur and I ever spent, — we both said

so ; and at night mother and father said it had been a dear Christmas, thanks to their children. And Arthur and I just looked at each other and said nothing ; we were so glad.



GLORIANA'S BURDEN.

NEW YORK, 1888.

TO

ANNE WILLIAMS.

I GIVE this tale, a paltry souvenir
Of days by sea,
Whose memory makes a sweet and sunny year
In life, for me.



GLORIANA'S BURDEN.



O - M O R R O W
would be Thanks-
giving, and here
she was, shut up
in the playroom,
with red spots all
over her neck and
arms, and only

Anastasia, her doll, allowed to come near
her, — excepting, of course, mamma.
Every one else was afraid of catching the
little red spots. Nannette was curled up
in the big arm-chair, where her mother
held her nights when she was tired, or

daytimes when she had been naughty and was sorry. She was thinking hard and was very cross, while she confided her woes to Anastasia. "It won't be Thanksgiving at all," she said, "with the measles." And she looked hard across the room out of the window, to stop the drops that hung on her eyelids. When they fell over, she simply gave up and buried her face in the cushions. She held Anastasia close to her cheek, and wept copiously over each separate thing she was to lose on the morrow. No service in church, with all the pretty decorations; no dinner with all the jolly cousins and Uncle Charlie and dear, funny Aunt Janet; no games in the evening, when dear father always played.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" she sobbed; "it's just horrid, and I am so miserable!"

"Why, Nannette," said her mother, coming into the room; "my poor little girl, what is the matter?"

"Who," answered Nannette, chokingly, "who ev-er heard — of Tha-anksgiving — with measles!"

Mrs. Marsden suppressed a smile, and sat down in the big chair with her.

"My rebellious little daughter," she said, "there are so many things worse than measles. Think if you were very ill in bed, or had the yellow fever, or something as dreadful, instead of sitting up here in your own room playing with your doll."

"I am not playing with my doll. Anastasia is trying to comfort me. She's expressing sympathy; but I just can't be comforted."

"I wonder if it's because you won't be

comforted?" Nannette did not answer. "I've a few minutes to spare, and I am going to tell you a story."

Nannette perceptibly brightened. "Is it a true one?" she asked.

"Not exactly," answered her mother. "Once upon a time —"

"Oh, Mamma! that's just like papa; please don't."

Mrs. Marsden laughed. "Well, then, some years ago" (Nannette settled back in her cushions as if this were satisfactory) "there was a young girl —"

"What was her name?" interrupted Nannette.

"Her name — was — Gloriana; and she was happy, and was loved by all her family and a great many friends. Some of these friends had burdens to carry, — some much heavier than others."

“What’s a burden?” asked Nannette.

“A burden is something heavy to bear or carry. When a pedler comes to the door with a big bundle of things on his back, that bundle is one kind of a burden; but there are other kinds which are harder. Gloriana had none to carry, till one day her father, who knew what was best, gave her one just to see if she could bear it.”

“What was in hers?” asked Nannette, looking a little troubled.

“Never mind now. Gloriana started to bear bravely; but she did n’t altogether understand, and before long she grew tired and tried to shake her burden off, which only made it the heavier. Instead of thinking of other people and other things, she thought only of herself and her own burden, and of how heavy it was.

Besides, she became so angry and unreasonable that she took up a lot of burdens that did not belong to her, which she need not have carried, and kept loading herself down, while she grew very crooked and very cross. One day she met a girl smaller than herself, carrying a much larger burden, who stopped when she saw how tired and cross Gloriana looked, and offered to carry her burden, too, for a little way. This made Gloriana suddenly see how bad and wilful she had been, and how good and patient a person could be. So first she dropped all the burdens that were not hers to carry, and then she was surprised to find how light and easy was the one that was left; and by and by that slipped off of itself, and she was as straight again as could be, and somehow happier than she had been before."

"Did n't she ever carry any more?"

"Yes; but she knew now that the best way was to be cheerful about it, and think of others, and that the burden would grow lighter and lighter all the time."

"Where did the other girl go to?"

"She went on bearing her burden and helping others."

"Did n't her burden slip off, ever?"

"No. She was one of those who have to carry some burden all their lives."

"What was her name?" asked Nannette, who had a thirst for details.

"Oh, she didn't have any name."

"Why?" asked Nannette.

"Oh, dear, because I did n't give her any," answered Mrs. Marsden, fairly cornered. "But there are many people in the world like her, who carry their burdens

always; and they are the very ones who often are the happiest. Do you remember that little boy who was at the kindergarten with you, who could n't walk?" Nannette nodded. "He is like Gloriana's friend."

Nannette shook her head. "Oh, no, Mamma; he never carried anything, not even his books and things. Bridget did that."

"My dear little daughter, listen. I told you there were different sorts of burdens, and those that you carry on your back are the easiest, smallest sort. That little fellow's lameness is one of the burdens I've been talking about, and one of the heavier ones, and one he 'must carry always.' Do you understand me, dear?"

Nannette drew in a long breath. "Yes, ma'am, but was Gloriana lame, too?"

"Oh, no. Perhaps Gloriana was very poor, or — perhaps — a little sick."

"Measles?" asked Nannette, looking up at her mother suddenly from the corner of her eyes.

"Perhaps so," said Mrs. Marsden, smiling; and then she left the room, glad to find her story had made an impression on the child's mind.

Nannette sat quite still for some time, thinking; then she went slowly to the looking-glass and counted the red spots on her face and wrists, but she found too many to number. She went as far as twenty, and stopped. Then she spoke aloud to herself in the glass. "Gloriana, Nannette Marsden, you have over twenty little red burdens to carry; but altogether they don't make one big one worth anything. Think how much worse it could be. You might

be deaf and dumb, or have only one leg, or something awful." She stopped a moment, and brought Anastasia and propped her up on the bureau against a cologne-bottle, in front of the mirror. Pointing to the doll she continued, "Think of the difference between this young lady and you, — how much smaller she is, and what a heavy burden she carries without minding. She can only say two words, and can't walk, and is only an adopted child, and besides has n't any Bridget, either, to carry her things." But just then Anastasia fell down flat on her face, either because she honestly felt she did not deserve her foster mother's praises, or else because the cologne-bottle failed to support her sufficiently. Nannette picked her up and went back to the arm-chair.

"Anastasia," she said, when she had settled herself comfortably among the pillows, "I want you to understand that having the measles on Thanksgiving is n't much; and you need n't comfort me any more, because I am quite cheerful, and I am going to be patient and not crooked and cross. And as I've a few minutes to spare, I am going to tell you a story: Once there was a little doll, with yellow hair and blue eyes, that could say 'mamma' and 'papa' when you squeezed her, like you, and had a beautiful pink and blue silk dress, and was very straight and pretty. But her papa doll, who was just like a sailor, dressed all in blue, with a real hat with streamers, tied a burden on her. He spoiled her so she could n't say 'mamma' and 'papa' any more, and she became deaf and dumb.

This made her very mad and cross, and she picked up lots of other burdens, not her own or other peoples, but just a lot that were lying around and did n't belong to anybody. Do you understand me, Anastasia, dear? if you don't, say so."

But Anastasia was silent, so Nannette continued, —

"Now one day this doll, whose name was Rose, met another doll, whose name was Violet, who had on a real little ulster like mamma's, and she was carrying more than Rose, and was not crooked or cross. She was an old-fashioned doll, who could not open and shut her eyes, or speak, either, — which is the kind of a burden one carries all the time; but she wanted to carry Rose's burdens for her. Then Rose was ashamed " (Nannette's voice was grow-

ing gradually fainter, and she had yawned several times, but she went on), "and she dropped her measles" (Nannette's eyes were closing), "and grew straight,—but — Gloriana always — said 'mamma' and 'papa' —" She was asleep, and Anastasia kept quite still and did not disturb her.

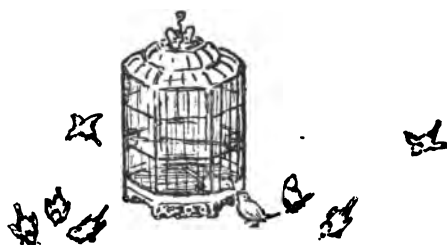
Nannette's mother put her to bed carefully, while she still slept. She was very hot and feverish, and through the evening she grew rapidly worse ; and when the doctor came he said it was the crisis, and she would be better or worse in the morning, — he thought better. All night Mrs. Marsden watched anxiously, and once rebellious thoughts crept into the sad mother's heart. "It will not be just, not right," she cried, "if she is taken from

me;" and just then Nannette stopped tossing a moment and said, "I am Gloriana, and really and truly I am quite cheerful. Don't give me any more to bear, and please give me cooler ones." And again, "Oh, yes, I can bear them." Mrs. Marsden touched the hot little forehead with her cool fingers, and breathed a silent prayer for forgiveness and strength for herself, and for recovery for her poor little sufferer.

In the morning Nannette was better, much better, and even bright, though very weak and unable to get up; but the crisis was past, and now it was only a question of days and patience. She made her mother go to the dinner table, so that she could hear all about it. Every one sent her messages. She had a box of beautiful

roses from Uncle Charlie, and the cousins sent her some fruit, which Aunt Janet gave her herself. She came right into the room, saying she was n't afraid of the measles; she'd had them three times. When they went to dinner they left her door open into the hall, so she could hear them. She heard father's grace, which was more beautiful than usual, and ended with a little thanksgiving that she was better, which made Nannette choky but very happy. And she heard all the chatter and laughter, and laughed herself a little; and toward the end, when she knew the sweet cider was being passed around, Uncle Charlie said very loudly, "Here's to the health of Miss Nannette Marsden," and the boys shouted, "Hear! hear!"

Nannette just squeezed Anastasia, and so tight she said "mamma" and "papa" three times running, while she sobbed joyfully, "It's a nice, lovely Thanksgiving, spite of the measles."



A LOAN TO THE LORD.

NEW YORK, April, 1889.

TO

GRACE AND RUTH HENDERSON.

Two sisters mine,
This story's thine;
That's one secret, and here's another:
My heart, it too
Belongs to you;
For I'm your big adopted brother.



A LOAN TO THE LORD.



THREE children were on the steps of a house in a small Maryland town. One, a girl about nine years old, stood on the top step, while the other two, a girl of seven years and a boy of six, stood on the lowest, holding hands, and gazing with rapt attention into the face of the girl above them. Once in a while they turned to look into each other's eyes, or to squeeze each other's hands.

You would not have supposed, at a first glance, that Dorothy Lanyon was a missionary from the far West, of twenty-three years' experience among the ignorant people and Indians; nor that Ralph Lanyon, her brother, and Mary Moore were the congregation of St. Luke's church, waiting for the contribution plate to be passed. Such, however, you found to be the case, if you stopped a moment and listened.

Dorothy had just come home with her mother from a special meeting in the church, where a missionary, a Mr. Scott, had made an address that had deeply moved her sympathetic little heart. She had determined from that moment to devote the rest of her life to missionary work. She decided to start for Wyoming Territory the very next day, with no

one but Marguerite, her French doll, and just her mother's shawl strap for her first silk dress, and some things for the poor Indians ; but when she found her mother forbade this, because she was too young, and for several other reasons (equally unreasonable on the part of her mother), she was forced to give up her first plan, for she felt it would be wicked to disobey, even if it was to be a missionary. Besides, Mr. Scott had said every one could help, — even those who stayed at home, and the very poorest too ; those who had n't money to give to the missionaries could give prayers and words to those who had money to give, telling what a great need there was.

So, as she could n't go and work herself in the West, Dorothy had lost no

time in persuading Ralph and Mary to come and play "meeting." She knew if she made it a game they would come easier.

It was time to make the missionary address. Dorothy coughed very long, until Mary was really frightened, and then she began:—

"Friends and brethren—"

"You're the brethren," whispered Mary to the rest of the congregation, "'cause you're a boy, and I'm the friends;" and both straightened themselves up and drew in a long breath. It seemed awfully like a sermon, and they felt a little inclined to go away, but they stood still and waited.

The missionary's story had made an impression on Dorothy, and she remembered it quite clearly. Once in a while

she embellished the telling with a few details of her own, but she kept close to the principal facts. After explaining that she lived in Wyoming Territory, with a wife and seven little ones (at which the two children beneath her looked awestruck), she continued:—

“Last November, it being winter, we found ourselves in a awful state. My wife was forced to wear the dress she was married in, all the time, it being the only one she had left.”

“My!” interrupted Mary. “I wonder if it was a white satin?”

“No, of course not; it must have been just a brown silk travelling-dress, probably—don’t interrupt,—well, and which she had wanted to keep for best. The children were but scantily clothed. There were only two pairs of rubbers in the

house, so that we had to take turns in going out of doors; and you know how dreadful it is to stay in all day, when every one else is out sliding, or—something. And they had n't any nice dolls to play with, only one, and that always belonged to the youngest. And now our provisions were getting pretty low, and our money was nearly all gone; and one day, when I had to drive thirty miles through the snow to a little log church we had built for the Indians especially, where they were beginning to come almost eagerly, and were willing to help work for the Lord, and were learning to love Him, our little baby was taken sick.

“There was no doctor within miles and miles, and no one to send for one, 'cause you see the rubbers would n't fit

the ones who were big enough to go; and so my wife and our eldest daughter, they watched over baby, and tried to do the best they could; but when I came back home, I was n't in time. He died in my wife's arms; and she did n't say a word, and did n't cry, but sat all day holding him, just quiet, till I came. That was the way I found them, with the children whispering among themselves in the corner.

"When we buried baby, a lot of the Indians came and watched us, and some brought herbs and stuff to the mother, and tried to show her their sympathy. And when I told them that she was willing, if the Lord wanted it, one of the worst Indians, and the one that had given me the most trouble, a naughty, bad man before, came and said he

wanted to learn to love the white man's God; and he is one of our best helpers now."

The tears were rolling down Ralph's and Mary's cheeks. Dorothy's own voice was choky.

"It's all true," she went on, forgetting she was the missionary; "he said so, and I love that Indian. Probably he takes charge of the Sunday-school, and sings in the choir. And sometimes his children have to lie in bed while their clothes are being mended, they have so few; and they have n't any aunts or uncles living next door to come and see them, nor any Christmas-tree, nor festivals; and sometimes their mother cries 'cause she can't get them things. And when their little baby boy died, and the Indian became a b'liever, she said God

took the baby that the Indian might be a Christian, and help the other Indians. And she didn't cry any."

It was too much for Ralph and Mary. They sank down on the steps, with their arms about each other, sobbing violently. Dorothy, herself, completely overcome by her feelings, joined the tearful group, until they all three grew calmer; then she said the choir would sing. At this, Ralph's eyes brimmed over afresh, because there was no choir; but Mary said they could go on the other side of the steps, and be the choir. So they went, and sang, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" through twice, it being the only hymn they knew.

Then Dorothy sent the choir back to be the congregation, and whispered, "Let us pray." The three small figures knelt

on the stone steps, with clasped hands and closed eyes.

“Dear Lord,” Dorothy prayed, “who loves us, and everybody, and the poor ignorant people who don’t know about you and the Bible, help us to be sort of missionaries, though we are little and can’t go away West, ’cause our mothers won’t let us; but help us to save money to send to the missionaries who do go, who are so poor, and so full of trouble and ’fliction.

“Dear Lord, please don’t let any more little babies die, even if it does make a b’liever; but just let it get dying, and then when the bad man b’lieves, make it well again. It’s so hard to have any one we love die. You love every one; but we have only just so many, and we miss them so much. Help the poor

missionaries, dear Lord, and make them rich. That one in Dakota, who was suffering with the cold, and that other one, somewhere else, who had lots of converts in a shed, with more outside, who wanted to come in, and there was no room for them. Build him a beautiful big church, dear Lord, with a steeple, and some bells that play a real tune, and pretty windows, and little boys to sing in white clothes. Do, dear Lord. Amen."

When she had finished her prayer, she said the minister must make one now. There was a painful pause, but Ralph proved equal to the occasion. He left Mary in the congregation, and joined Dorothy on the top step. He folded his little hands just as he had seen Dr. Paine do, and shut his eyes very tight, and said in an earnest voice, —

"Dear Lord, now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep, and the
heathen;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take, and the
heathen. Amen."

When Ralph opened his eyes, he found the congregation had grown. A young street-boy was standing behind Mary.

"What yer doing?" the new-comer asked.

"It's a missionary meeting," answered Dorothy.

"What's that," asked the boy, "is it the theayter?"

"Oh, my!" gasped Mary.

"No," said Dorothy, "I'm a missionary telling our congregation about the poor Indians and white people who don't know about the Lord. I've been twenty-three years in the service."

“ Oh, come off ! ” exclaimed the stranger,
“ what do yer take me for ? ”

“ Well, I mean,” explained Dorothy,
“ that is what I ’m pretending. I saw the
real missionary this morning, and I ’m tell-
ing Ralph and Mary, and we ’re doing it
over again. What is your name ? Per-
haps you ’d like to join the congregation ? ”

“ Yes, I ’ll join, seeing it don’t cost noth-
ing, and my name ’s Joe.”

“ Well, Joe, you see the missionaries
work for the Lord.”

“ How much do they get ? ”

“ Oh, nothing ; that ’s just it. They ’re
awfully poor, and need money dreadfully.”

“ I would n’t work for Him then ; who
is He ? ”

“ Why the Lord, — He is God, you
know.”

“ No, I don’t know ; who is He, any-

how? I've heard of Him, but I never could make out who He was exactly."

"Not know who God is!" cried Mary, while Ralph's little knees began to tremble, and he sat down on the fourth step, half way between the missionary and the congregation, saying in an awe-struck whisper, "He's a — a — real, live heathen!" And he looked at Joe, shaking his head sadly.

"Dorothy, you tell him," prompted Mary, drawing a little away from the new arrival. And Dorothy, feeling that this was almost as good as Dakota, began. She told the story of the Saviour's life and love in so simple a way that the boy — who had, no doubt, heard the same facts from older lips before — now, for the first time, understood; and coming from a child near his own age it

was more probably true, it seemed to him. He wanted to know — and so they told him — about the missionaries; how in need of money they were, and what hard times they and their families had. If you had n't any money, you must give prayers; if you had money, you must give both. It was really very easy.

Joe said he sold papers for a living, and he was n't exactly what you called wealthy, but he guessed he could give something. He thought he would like to contribute right away, before he spent it, — some he had laid away for something else. He would bring it to-morrow, and perhaps he would bring one of the "fellers" with him. He was afraid they would n't believe that the Lord loved them, but he thought He did; and they could try and missionaryize the others. He promised to

come to Dorothy and Ralph's house the next afternoon, and the meeting broke up.

In the morning Ralph appeared at breakfast despondent. He had been dreaming all night of those poor people in Dakota who were standing outside the shed. He wanted to build a church for them right away; and even if he did n't do that, he had so little to give anyway, and it always took so long to save. He was almost tearful as he started off to his school with his sister, who went part of the way.

Mrs. Lanyon was up in the top of the house selecting some half-worn clothes to put in a box the ladies were getting ready for the missionaries, when Bridget burst into the room, crying hysterically.

"What is the matter?" asked Mrs. Lanyon.

"Oh! marm," began Bridget, but could get no further. Mrs. Lanyon wondered what could have happened to the poor girl.

"What is the trouble, Bridget?" she said; "tell me, and perhaps I can help you."

"Oh! it is n't for meself that I'm crying, marm, but it's for you, that are the good mistress to me."

"For me? Why, what is it?" Mrs. Lanyon stood up, dropping the lid of the trunk. But the poor girl could not answer.

Then, with a cry, Mrs. Lanyon said, "Ralph!" and Bridget sobbed out "Yes!" But Mrs. Lanyon was already gone. She rushed down-stairs; in the hall she met a strange doctor.

"Tell me! What is it?" she gasped,

out of breath, and clutching him by the arm.

“Madam,” the doctor said, “you must be calm and brave for your boy’s sake. He has met with a bad accident in the street, and I hope we will be able to pull him through all right. I never saw such a plucky little fellow.”

Very pale, and with lips tightly drawn, but with a mother’s smile on her face, Mrs. Lanyon went in to her child. He lay on the big office table, with cushions and shawls under and about him. He was whiter than his mother, and his eyes were shut.

“Ralph!” she whispered, and leaned over his face and gently kissed him. He opened his eyes and tried to smile. One of his hands lay outside the covering, and the fingers twitched nervously, as if with

pain. His mother took them within her own loving tender ones, and held them tight and kissed them.

When a consulting physician came she left the room, promising to come back soon. Out in the hall she prayed, — prayed the prayer of Gethsemane; and then she thought of that greatest of griefs, which the Man of Sorrows had borne, and she ended her prayer as He had, — “Not my will, but Thine be done.”

It seemed so long, so long before the physicians came out of the room. She could hear their low whispering, and once in a while Ralph's voice answering a question. Finally the door opened, and she rose hastily from her knees. She motioned the doctor to follow her into the dining-room. There he told her the only hope of saving the boy's life was by losing his

little leg. Mrs. Lanyon listened, rigid and still and suffering. Was he to know? They had told him. She hid her face in her hands. The doctor's own voice shook.

"Madam," he said, "I never came in contact with a braver, more perfect personality, in old or young, in all my practice. I realized his was the nature, no matter how young, to be told the truth. I told him in order to live and be a man he must part with his leg. I told him that he would be asleep, and know nothing about it, — only when he woke up it would be gone; and that then he would be rich, — for, Madam, the City is to blame for the boy's accident, and it is only doing right to the boy to sue the City for him. When I said money, he spoke for the first time. He asked if it would be enough to build a church with. I said yes, wonder-

ing what he was thinking of. Then he said, —

“ ‘It’ will be just as if I gave my leg to the missionaries, and they built a church with it, won’t it, Doctor?’ ”

“ I began to understand ; and after two more of his little speeches, I did wholly understand. And, Madam, I kissed your son, and I told him if there should n’t happen to be enough, I would give what was needed. And I know that if this boy were mine, I would thank God for having had him a day, if he were taken from me to-night forever.”

“ Does he realize what is to be done? ”

“ No. He is not yet over the shock of the accident. Nothing is quite clear to him.”

“ Is there any danger of — ? ”

“ There is.”

Mrs. Lanyon grasped the baluster railing to steady herself. "When will it be?" she asked.

"As soon as possible. To-day."

It was over, and three days had passed, — days full of suffering, patience, weariness, and love; but soon it would be only love. Joe had been to see him, and had brought one of the "fellers," just to have a look at him, and take him by the hand. Ralph did not talk very much, — he was too tired. Joe told him that a lot of the "fellers" were going to try and help the missionaries. He had told them how "hard up they was," and how even the poorest folks could help, just a few pennies, or, if you had n't them, a prayer. He said the "fellers" thought they would not be much "on the prayer," but they

would try and give some coppers every month.

"Tell them to give both," exclaimed Ralph; "and tell them I've given my leg, and it's going to build a church for those on the outside."

"I guess we're on the outside," said Joe, with a very husky voice, and eyes too blurred to see out of.

"Then it's for you and the other 'fellers,'" said Ralph, smiling sweetly, as Joe went out.

Ralph did not know how long after this it was that Dorothy came in and kissed him, and said she would n't see him again for a while. He did n't understand why. But he was n't alone, for both father and mother were by him. He slept and waked, at intervals, dreaming such dreams. Once he asked, —

"Mamma, are there one-legged people in heaven?"

"No, dear, I don't think so," answered his mother. "Those who are lame on earth are made perfect in heaven."

"Then," Ralph exclaimed, "then I've just only *lent* my leg, after all."

Soon he broke the silence in the room again. "Joe is a good boy, isn't he? I think he'll be one of the 'Lord's chosen.'"

"The Lord's chosen" he had heard about once in church, and loved, and often remembered. He continued, "It looks as if, perhaps, maybe, the Lord was going to choose me." The eyes of the husband and wife met over the child. "Sing, please, Mamma," Ralph whispered.

The woman made a mother's effort. "What shall I sing?" she asked.

“ Jesus, lover of my soul.”

He opened his eyes, and looked straight up. They were large, blue eyes, and seemed to see past the room and its ceiling, up to the walls of gold and flooring of precious stones.

“ Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly ;
While the nearer waters roll,
While — ”

His lips moved. She stopped singing to listen. His two little hands were folded across his breast, his eye-lids slowly fell, and she heard these tremblingly and faintly whispered words, —

“ Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.”

And asleep he fell in the Lord's arms.

Dorothy and Mary were sitting together on the steps. Joe and the other “ fellers ”

had gone back to their homes. Ralph and his flowers had gone out of the house forever. The children spoke in whispers. Mary was saying, "I think the Lord was jealous 'cause he gave the missionaries his leg, so He took him all for Himself."

"Oh!" answered Dorothy, "that's wicked. God is never jealous; He's perfect. No, He loved him so, I guess; or else there's some one going to be a b'liever in his place."

"I don't see why," said Mary, with a great lump in her throat; "and I want Ralph."

"So do I," said Dorothy, "and I don't know, either, and I can't understand; but I guess we will, sometime, know all about it."

"I guess Ralph does now."

"Yes, Ralph does now."

There was a chapel built way out in the far, far West, to the memory of Ralph Lanyon; and it was called St. John's Chapel, because Saint John was the Saviour's beloved disciple, and Joe and his friends contributed enough money to buy most of the seats. It was large, with room for the many who came there to learn to love God, and there were never any who had to stand on the outside.



BERENSON'S MODEL.

A STUDY.

BUSHEY, HERTS., September, 1888.

TO

MARIEL ROBINSON.

To you I dare to dedicate

 This little story I have told.

Though it's unworthy such high rate,

To you I dare to dedicate,

With pride in you,—insatiate

 With love,—nor, prithee, deem me bold;


To you I dare to dedicate

 This little story I have told.



BERENSON'S MODEL.

A STUDY.



T was the attitude of the child as she sat on the curbstone, resting her chin in her hand, and gathered up into an intense little human knot, that first struck the artist.

“If I were a poet,” he said to himself, “and she were a sonnet, I know what I’d call her,—‘Yearning.’”

He walked on for a block, and then turned back. She had not moved, and he wondered why she sat there so still and so long, and of what she was

thinking; she was much too young to feel all the small figure expressed to him, and Berenson resolved to speak to her.

The child wore a faded brown gown, which somehow hung gracefully about her. Her little arms were long and thin; the hand which supported her chin was thin, too, and white and shapely. Her face was turned to one side, showing only the pale outline of a delicate square jaw and high cheek-bone; it was partly hid, besides, by streaks of hair, — a dull red-gold without the yellow lights, — which fell over and beside her forehead. She was a model he would have dreamed of.

“A penny for your thoughts, little one,” he said.

She turned half around, and looked

up at him out of big brown eyes, lifting long dark lashes.

He repeated his question; but she did not answer.

"Can't you speak at all?" he laughed, trying to tease her; but she only shook her head.

"Why?" he asked, determined not to be balked.

She took her hand away from her chin, and lifting the other from her lap, made a few rapid movements gracefully with her lithe fingers. She was dumb!

Berenson started; he had not suspected it in the least. He did not know the mute language, and could not understand what she had tried to say; but he thought she was not deaf, so he would be able to speak to her. He told her

he was very sorry he could not understand her signs, because he wanted to ask her about herself—and her home, he added, wondering if she had one.

“Have you a mother?” he began, asking it kindly, feeling that if it could be answered by a motion that would be something gained.

The child nodded.

“A father?”

She shook her head. Suddenly he remembered his sketch-book. He took it out of his pocket, with a pencil, and handed it to her. She was little and young, and very poor; yet, looking into her face, it did not occur to him to question if she could write. First he asked, “Where is your home?”

The child hesitated a moment, with the pencil over a blank page, and pointed

down the street. But Berenson pretended not to understand, motioning toward the sketch-book. Then she printed in good letters, "Green Street," and added her name, "Mary Evans," and looked up at him. He nodded, and she went on. "Fifth floor, mother and me"—underneath that, "Mother has bad knees," a long pause, "She sews."

By degrees Berenson obtained the child's little history, while he walked back with her to the place she called home. He noticed when they started that his companion had an indiscriminate collection of something in her lap, which proved to be a doll without a head, whose contorted linen limbs were rather overdressed in odd old bits of cheapest finery. She carried this progeny tenderly in her arms.

The next day the students in Mr. Berenson's studio had a new model, and one that very soon became the pet of them all. Before many days, too, the pale tints of her skin, her great eyes, and straight, sad hair affected the workers in the studio as they had the artist the first time he saw her, and following his suggestion they all began calling her "Yearning." The child herself was pleased; there was something in the sound of the word which appealed to her, although she did not understand what it meant.

From the very beginning it was an intense delight to her to pose; and she would stand or sit for hours, refusing to rest in between, and insisting that she was not tired. She was especially glad when she was painted in character, as an

imaginary or historical person, and always asked them to tell her what as such a one she ought to be, and do, and how behave. So that really the child learned something about the habits and manners of people of other times and in different phases of life from her own ; and when she left the studio in her little brown gown, she did not leave her character behind her, but acted it out as best she could all the evening, and each day, till a new pose gave her new manners to assume.

She became a greater comfort than ever to her bedridden mother, whose poor knees grew worse instead of better, and whose work, common sewing, came in less and less often ; but with Mary's steady earnings as a model, Mrs. Evans made the ends meet, and on Sundays lap

over, with a pudding for their noon-day meal, fresh from the bake-shop.

Mary came home every day at half-past four o'clock with Angelica (Angelica was the name of the headless doll); and after a certain amount of arranging of the scanty belongings of the poor little room, which she always felt necessary, sat down by her mother and told her what had happened since morning, making her fingers fly like lightning, using words and phrases she heard in the studio, — which she was as quick to adopt as she was unable to spell correctly, but her mother knew no better, — and still keeping up as well as she could the character for which she was posing. After their supper she usually posed Angelica as nearly as possible as she had been in the studio that day, and with scraps of

board, and a few hoarded paints from the refuse of the students' boxes, herself seriously worked away for an hour or more. She frequently had difficulty with her model, and now and then laid down her working materials to free her hands to reason with her.

"I take you to the studio with me every day, Angelica," she would spell out (she had been taught enough at an asylum once to get along), "just so that you may see how I do it, to copy me for *my* work; but you are never what you ought to be. You are always just Angelica, and awful awkward, I must say."

But when her mother sometimes endeavored to sympathize with her, at Angelica's expense, she flew to the latter's support, excusing her on the ground that

they must not forget that the child had no head, which was, of course, a great drawback to one's being a model.

One week after she had been under Mr. Berenson's wing several months, Yearning was posed for a picture which was particularly agreeable to her mother and herself; for her mother assumed as well as she could the same manners and expressions that each time were brought home from the studio. Yearning was dressed in long, flowered skirts, with big panniers, and her hair was twisted high on her head with pearls, and she held a single rose stiffly in one hand. (The rose lay each evening on her mother's pillow, for the fresh one used every day was given her.) She was only a part of the picture, but she was the best part, though she did not know it.

These evenings the three chairs had to be flat against the wall, and plenty of space between the table and chest of drawers, to make room for the little imaginary seventeenth-century maiden, in her limp, brown gown. And this living in the imaginary realm of her child took the thoughts of the sick mother away from herself, and gave to the plain, ordinary woman, whom sickness had in a measure refined, a sweet amusement and pleasure. She allowed herself to be waited on by the small, stiff, and supposedly panniered young person, with all the dignity she could echo from the bed where she had been lying so many, many years. This picture was nearly finished and they were both very sorry. It had been an easy one for the models, and besides, Mary spelled out to her mother,

it had been Angelica's most successful pose. Then, too, they did not know what the next picture would be, and Yearning's last character had not been a satisfactory one to her. It was a Quakeress, and she missed the richer draperies, and had found it confusing using thee and thou on her fingers. As for Angelica, as a Quakeress she had been simply a rigid failure. Mary told her mother Angelica was like one of the lady students whom another, her dearest friend, had said needed a great deal of style to make her good-looking.

"How d'ye do, Lady Mary," said Mrs. Evans, as her daughter came in one evening toward the end of the week. It was a great trial to Yearning that she could not make her mother talk like the ladies in the studio. She often remem-

bered words to tell her when she came home, and which the students would write out on a piece of paper for her; but the greatest difficulty of all came then. She could not pronounce them herself, and Mrs. Evans followed simple ideas of her own in pronunciation, which were not likely to be successful outside the phonetic method. Her next remark was an instance.

"Are you very fattygude?" she asked, earnestly.

"Lady Mary" curtesied low and shook her head. She went to the bed and gave her mother the rose with a kiss, and after arranging the chairs and tables, placed a supper on the latter for Angelica. This was something she never failed to do. A woman in the tenement above them had been found fault with by the Society

for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, for not giving her small boy enough to eat, and it had made a strong impression upon Yearning's sensitive nature. It should never be said of her, she motioned to her mother, that she starved her own child.

Then she sat down with her hands free, ready to talk.

"Countess," she said, and stopped.

"Proceed," said her mother.

Yearning rose and curtesied, and then continued, "Countess, I am to be hung."

The sick woman started up from her pillow nervously, and then laughed, "What do you mean, Mary?" she asked, forgetting her assumed manner.

But Yearning drew herself up stiffly, and arranged an imaginary train.

"You forget yourself," she reprimanded; "remember the example you set Angelica."

"I ask your pardin'," begged Mrs. Evans, lapsing back into the Countess; "and will you hand me my embroidery from the cabinet?"

The child brought the shirt which her mother was putting a new bosom into and went on, —

"I am to be hung in the Academy."

The Countess thought she was speaking as some historical person. Once before Yearning had posed as a young girl imprisoned in the Tower, who was afterward beheaded. She had insisted at that time in going through all the harrowing details of parting with her mother and Angelica, and Mrs. Evans did not like it. This sort of a pose depressed her, and she wished

Mary would n't. She felt like reminding her of the trouble the former pose had given her with Angelica; for the awful incongruity of posing the doll as a maiden about to be beheaded, had quite afflicted her, until Mr. Berenson explained it was an example of the old saying that "Coming events cast their shadows before."

Mrs. Evans was sorry, but her curiosity was a little aroused.

"What is your crime, Lady Mary?" she asked.

Lady Mary was puzzled.

"And is the Academy the stylish jail of your time?" remembering that the former sad event took place in the Tower of London. Mary explained. She meant the picture of her was to be hung on the wall in a big building called the Academy,

with a great many others; and a prize was to be given for the best. And she was to be allowed to take Angelica the first day, when only the painters went. She was to pose for Mr. Berenson alone for this picture, in his own private studio, and only Angelica was to see the canvas while it was being done; for it was intended to be a surprise, and she of all the students alone could be trusted.

Mary said she was sorry she could not tell her mother more about this picture, but it wouldn't be right; and instead she used to talk of it to Angelica every evening, and her mother watched the rapid little fingers, and learned for herself.

Yearning used to say no one knew what a comfort she and Angelica were to each other, because they understood perfectly

how it was n't necessary to talk to be happy.

The new picture took longer to paint than the others did, and it had a subduing effect upon Yearning. She was an angel now, she told the doll before Angelica had been to the studio, dressed in light silvery green, and with lovely all-colored wings. Her mother lay and watched her motioning, and her rapt, earnest face and glistening eyes, drawing in quick, short breaths excitedly.

"Think of being an angel, Angelica, and the silk all about you, yards and yards and yards, and so soft, and so close, and so green, like the grass, only different and lighter! And my hair, which is red, as you know, Angelica, is all down my back, and some comes over my shoulders in front; and I've a beautiful lily on a

long stem in my hand, held down, *so* — and it smells so sweet — and my other hand is on a beautiful sort of little peana, only with gold strings instead of keys, which they call a lire. No one plays them here; but you will when you're an angel, Angelica, if you'll be good, and not mind your not talking like other people. And then I've wings! gold and blue and pinky all over. Oh, I'll just have to wait till you see *them*! But what I like best of all is a round gold ring, big, over my head."

Angelica went to the studio several times before the picture was finished, and sat perfectly still in front of it for hours at a time, which proved, Yearning said, that she felt and liked it. Then it was hung, and they both went to see it on the day with all the painters, whose kind

"intentions" to Angelica and herself, she told her mother afterward, they both appreciated. And Mary went again the next day, and came home very tired, and said a great many people had looked at her picture who seemed to like it, and had called her all sorts of things.

"We are Preraphaelite, Angelica, and I" (for she always classed Angelica and herself together), "which is nice, for I can tell by the way he said it; and we are Burnjones too, and that was nice; and we are the best parts of Rosetty, — whatever that is; and once, did you notice, Angelica, a man who went all around very fast as if he were hunting the doorway, said 'Bosh!' which I'm sure is not as nice as the others. But we are a great deal Angelica, and a great many, many things; and we've bin hung, and we ought to be

very grateful." And she felt so tired she put Angelica to bed first, and then went herself.

In the morning Mary did not get up. She told her mother she was n't quite rested, and would just lie still for a minute. "Angelica must wait on herself," she added, and then shut her eyes, and lay for hours without moving. Mrs. Evans was worried, but did not know what to do. There was bread in the cupboard within her reach, and she tried to make Mary eat some; but the child refused. She said an angel and a Preraphaelite never ate; she only wanted to smell the sweet lily and listen to the music. The mother grew more uneasy. She waited and waited for some one to come in; and finally, to her great joy and surprise, was rewarded with Mr. Berenson in the late afternoon.

"Oh, sir!" she said instantly, "my little Mary — your little Yearning, sir — is sick, and I don't know what to do for her. She has been queer all day."

Berenson stepped to one side, and looked at the wan, wonderful little face, and it suddenly seemed to him then that she was much thinner than she was when he found her a six months before. He felt his throat filling as it flashed across his mind perhaps he had tired her out, overworked her.

"I will go, and bring back a doctor, an old friend of mine," he said to Mrs. Evans, and then spoke to the child herself.

"Yearning," — she turned her head and looked at him, — "I came to tell you that your picture has taken the prize, and the money is all to be yours."

Yearning half smiled, as if she almost realized what he said, and then lifting her arms wearily, she turned toward the other side of the bed where her doll lay, and slowly spelled out, "Angelica, dear, we have taken the prize." Then she shut her eyes and seemed to go to sleep.

Mrs. Evans was crying softly.

Berenson rushed after a doctor, an old school friend, — a man he thought would do more than most others, and take an interest perhaps. He was himself much alarmed, but the doctor relieved him after his first visit. He said that the child was unstrung; hers was a morbid nature, and her life of late had been too unreal, too imaginative. Her being dumb prevented her enjoying the companionship of other children, and her whole young life was unnatural. But that was not all; he

said there was a chance — as she was not deaf, and for other reasons which a doctor knows — of her being able to learn to speak in the proper place and under proper treatment. It was not at all a sure thing, and would of course take money. Berenson told him about his picture and how he had determined when he sent it to the Academy, if it took the prize, to devote the money to Yearning.

Before Mary and her mother could realize it, it was all settled; and Mary went away with the doctor to Hartford, to a large place where there were a number of children all like herself, and who were there for the same longed-for end. She left Angelica to be company for her mother, and Berenson promised to go often to see them, and to let them want

for nothing. Both he and the doctor were careful not to raise Mrs. Evans's hopes too high about Mary's learning to speak; but the bare possibility was joy to the poor woman, and made her part with her child quite cheerfully. That same evening, fearing she would be lonely, Berenson dropped in for a moment; outside the door he heard her singing softly to herself, and rather sweetly, "Just as I am without one plea," and he found her lying contentedly, with Angelica beside her and some quaint child drawings in her hands.

After the first month Yearning herself knew that she could never be different, — that she never would be able to talk like other people. They thought it best to tell her, so that she would devote all her wishes to her other studies; and she

bore her disappointment bravely. She went off alone and wrote a special letter to Angelica, and enclosed it in one to her mother. She wrote, —

“ You must be happy just as you are, for you can't be different, dear Angelica. I write this to make you stop wishing.”

And then she stopped wishing herself.

She grew strong and well and more like other young people, — as nearly like as she could with a nature so entirely different; and she was away four years, studying in the schoolroom and out-of-doors, and when she had leisure, drawing and painting. When she did come home finally, wondering, in a half-childish, half-womanlike way what was to become of her next, and what she was going to do now, she found a surprise awaiting her. She

said, when she was told, she had not been so happy since she was "hung." She was to go back to Mr. Berenson's studio, not as a model, but as a *student*!

But Angelica's art-work was over.

"You have not grown a bit, Angelica," Mary said, her second evening home; "you are still a child. You must go away for a change;" and she sent her, through the doctor, to a little deaf-and-dumb girl she had helped to take care of in the Asylum at Hartford.

Ten years after the day an artist, strolling, found a lonely, silent child on a city curbstone, a picture in the Academy exhibition, which read in the catalogue "Portrait of Clifford Berenson, by M. Evans," received honorable mention; and there were people who said, and who

seemed to know, that it was painted by the original of a picture which took the prize in the Spring Academy ten years before, — a picture no one forgot, called “Yearning.”



PIETRO'S ANTHEM.

AN INTERLUDE.

NEW YORK, February, 1887.

TO

GRACE MOSHER.

WHEN Pietro sighed for kind Italian skies,
He might have found his comfort in your eyes.

When Pietro sang his "Ave," heartsick child,
What sympathy for him if you had smiled!



PIETRO'S ANTHEM.



PIETRO was alone in the great city of the New World. The man who had brought him across the broad ocean, so far away from his sunny Italy, had deserted him; and now the woman who had let his master their lodging told him money was money, and she could keep him no longer for nothing. He thought the grief in his heart would burst it; neither

voice nor tears would come. He gave one look around him and then went out, bare-headed and empty-handed.

He was a very little fellow, with short dark curls about a sadly sweet face; with large deep eyes that told you his story without need of words.

On the door-step Pietro sank, his head in his arms, and for a long time he remained so without moving. A small, sorry-looking kitten, coming inquisitively along the hall, was stopped in her way by this little heap of humanity. She paused a moment, and then made a gentle dab at it with her paw. Not attracting his attention, she became more bold, and brushed by the little shoulder, softly purring, with that dumb look of sympathy in her eyes which raises the animal so near to the human being; but

Pietro did not move. Then puss, still purring, climbed upon his arm, crept underneath his wrist close to his drooping head, where, curling up, she nestled. Pietro lifted his head and saw her; took her up in his arms, — to her great discomfort, — held her tight to his breast and burst into tears.

“Ah, my little one!” he sobbed, “come to my heart,” and rocked himself to and fro on the step. By degrees he became calm, even comforted, and softly sang, under his breath, snatches of melody his mother had sung over her flower-stall in that dear far-away land; and later, when a coming crowd of noisy boys threatened his peace, he gathered the kitten miscellaneously into his arms, and starting up, trudged on, straight ahead — anywhere.

In a large church an organist was sitting, dreaming, at the organ. It was late in the afternoon of a busy day; the stained glass was growing deeper-tinted, sombre and indistinct; only one window showed clearly, and that was in line with the sinking sun. Besides the colors in this window were lighter, — against a pale blue sky the figure of the Good Shepherd in a robe of white, holding a small ewe lamb tenderly in his arms. It stood out from the surrounding dimness and gloom, and even caught the eye of the tired man at the organ. "Beautiful window," he murmured half aloud, and then with a sigh ran his fingers over the keys, running one familiar strain into another, or composing out of his own mood, playing the care and weariness away through his finger-tips. The melody stole through the

great church, sweet and lovely, filling the shadowy nave and aisles and chancel, — stole way down to a tiny figure standing awe-struck just inside the doors, and filled his little heart to overflowing.

Pietro had heard in the street outside the faint sound of the organ, and, hungry for the music he loved, had dared to push between the half-closed doors into the church. There, opposite the window of the Good Shepherd, he stood, rapt and motionless, with the kitten clasped tightly in his arms, and bathed in the soft colors that fell upon him. He seemed almost a little reflection of the sun-illuminated figure in the memorial window.

Pietro was drawn nearer and nearer to the music, and slowly and softly he went up the long aisle, his head barely reaching the top of the old-fashioned pews. Only

once he stopped, to re-arrange the kitten, which was slipping down, and had been for some time in imminent danger of death by suffocation; then he went on. A great longing came to him to sing, and, as if in answer, the organist began to play something familiar to the child. It was only an *Ave Maria* often sung, but it was the same Pietro had sung in the little church at home, the same he had heard in the great cathedral; and suddenly he opened his lips and sang, —

"A-ve-Mar-i-a! A-ve-Mar-i-a!

O-ra-pro-no-bis — "

on to the end. He let his arms fall which freed the kitten. How his heart beat, how his breast swelled as he sang! with two big tears ready to fall from his full eyes.

The organist had half turned, startled at the first note, but continued playing,

fearing the singer would stop when he stopped. The child, however, seemed unconscious of his surroundings, singing in his clear, sweet soprano through the last repetition, —

“ A-ve-A-ve-Mar-i-a — ”

and then he stood motionless, hands clasped, eyes wet, behind the organist.

The man drew him toward him, and his own voice was not of the strongest as he asked who had taught him to sing.

“ My mother, in Italy, before she died,” Pietro said, with a faint smile, which touched the musician. He had picked up English quickly after his arrival in America, and now could speak it well, and he answered a few questions about his short life earnestly and quietly.

The organist was impressed by his story, and ran his fingers over the keys of the

organ for a few minutes without speaking, trying to think of some way to help him. He could not himself offer him a home, for his own household was already crowded; but he would shelter him for the present, until some plan could be determined on. He had made up his mind already that Pietro should sing at Easter.

It was when they started to leave the church that Pietro remembered puss. In exceeding distress he began an arduous search for her, and she was finally found at the foot of the pulpit fast asleep. The organist was much amused at this, and said he should tell the rector the effect of his pulpit even upon dumb animals. He himself did not at first see the need of taking the kitten with them; but Pietro wished it so strongly he consented. At

the end of the aisle, where he had stood when he first entered the church, Pietro paused. It must have been the simplicity of the window that attracted him. He had seen much more splendid ones in his own art-perfected country; but perhaps he could understand this Figure better than those magnificent mitred and sceptred figures of the stained glass and painted frescos in his birthplace.

"That window is in memory of a little boy," said the organist, — "a little boy like you. The Lord took him up into his arms, and his mother is left here alone; and she gave that window in memory of him."

Tears came into the child's eyes.

"Has He him *so*?" he asked, pointing to the window, and then, without waiting for an answer, he added, "But Pietro, he

is alone, and his mother He has so." His fingers closed tightly about the hand of the organist, and they passed on, out through the porch.

Pietro's new life was very strange to him; but he grew more and more accustomed to it, and tried to show his gratitude in a bashful, boyish way. He won the hearts of all the family; and the organist's wife even pleaded to keep him with them until he grew old enough to care for himself. He was one of those little souls a true woman loves to guide and foster. They had both watched him closely at first, for it was not a little dangerous, this taking a strange child into one's home; but the boy in a short time disarmed them of all suspicion.

Every day he went with his new friend

to the rehearsal, and made friends in a quiet, odd little way among the other choristers.

So the few days before Easter passed quickly by. Rumors of his *protégé* and his beautiful voice the organist purposely started, hoping to excite an interest which might lead to something; and in his heart he had an especial hope, of which, however, he said nothing.

The day of the great feast came with its music and flowers and gladness; and Pietro thought he had never been so happy as when he stood in his white robe, at the end of the first row of choristers, ready to sing — *alone*. He was not frightened. The organist had trained him well, and the boy was unconscious of everything save the music. He was to sing the first of the special anthems, and the last of the

preceding responses had been said. He watched for his signal, and when it came, he only clasped his hands a little tighter under his cotta, and lifted his head and sang, —

“ Christ our Pass-o-ver is sac-ri-ficed for us.”

His eyes were fixed on the window where the Good Shepherd held the lamb in his arms, — it helped him to understand; and the words came to the listening congregation with wonderful tenderness and meaning. As he finished, quickly burst from the throats of all the white-robed singers, the repetition, —

“ Therefore there-fore let us keep, us keep, us keep, the feast ! ”

An echo of the last words died away from the lips of the boys, and the voices were hushed, as first softly, then rising clearer and higher, Pietro sang again : —

“Not-with the old-leav-en neither the leaven of malice and wick-ed-ness —”

The sunshine through a golden window behind him made a radiance about him, and with the scent of the lilies on the altar, floated over the boy like incense, while he sweetly finished, —

“But-with-the un-leavened bread-of-sincer-i-ty, sincerity and truth sincerity-and-truth and truth !”

And the chorus seemed to catch the words, rapt in their beautiful music, and shouted them in grander, mightier strains to all the church, the earth, the sky!

There were many tearful eyes turned toward the little chorister when he had finished ; and the organist gave a long sigh and said, half aloud to himself, “ Ah, that voice was not given him for nothing !”

His eyes wandered over the crowd of familiar faces, all earnest and wondering

now, toward a little woman who sat on one side, underneath the window, where Pietro once had stood.

She sat quite still, her eyes fixed longingly on the boy, who was standing, motionless as she, with his lips parted and his head thrown slightly back. She could see his little breast still heaving, while in her own ears and heart there seemed to ring again, —

“Sacrificed for us, for us — for me,” she added; “*sacrificed* for me. Let us keep — the feast — the *feast* — ah! how?” she drew the heavy black veil she wore over her face, and sank down upon her knees.

After service question after question was asked and answered about Pietro; and the organist was content, and waited.

The next morning's mail brought him a letter which he seemed to have expected;

it was a square envelope with a small black seal upon it.

"From Mrs. Holland," he said, in answer to his wife's look of inquiry, and hastily reading, added, "It is as I hoped."

In a few moments he started to go out. His wife helped him on with his coat.

"I am so glad," she said, "and so happy. You're always helping some one, and me most of all, you *dear* boy!" She was reaching up to fasten the top button of his coat; he bent down and — interrupted her. Then he laughed.

"Boy! pretty old boy, at forty-two. What'll I be at eighty?"

"Still a boy; always a boy to me."

Late that same day, he and Pietro went into the library by themselves, and there

he asked the little fellow how he would like to live with a dear, kind lady, who would care for him and love him as if she were his own mother.

“Does she sell flowers?” Pietro asked.

“No,” answered the organist, smiling; “but she buys them. She is not poor; she lives in a large house with beautiful things about her; a piano —” The boy’s eyes were sparkling.

“Oh!” he exclaimed — then suddenly his eyes grew sorrowful — “would I have to leave you?”

His friend explained to him how it was impossible for them to have him with them always, although they wished to, and should always love him. But this lady was kind and good; she had lost a little boy like Pietro, and was lonely; she had heard him sing, and had seen him, and

she wanted him to come and live with her, and try to love her.

Pietro finally consented. He bade the family a rather tearful good-by and left with them, for remembrance, the one thing of his own he had been fond of,—his only possession, the kitten.

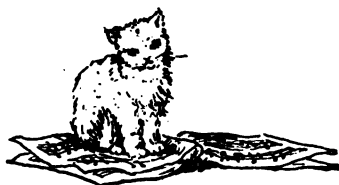
“This is your little Italian singer,” said the organist to Mrs. Holland; and then he went away and left them together.

Returning later, and going in unannounced, as he had been asked to do, he instinctively stopped a moment in the doorway of the room where he had left his charge.

“My other mother sang them to me,” Pietro was saying, slowly and sweetly, “and now Pietro will sing them to you.” And listening, his friend heard him singing

some Italian flower-songs; they were the same he had sung to the kitten that day he wandered into the church. He stood by the lady as he sang, leaning against the side of her chair; and when he had finished she clasped him in her arms, and he, standing up on tip-toe, reached his little hands about her neck and laid his cheek against hers.

The organist turned and went out, closing the door softly behind him.



THE FÊTE, THE PRINCESS, AND
THE ASTRONOMER.

NEW YORK, April, 1890.

TO

MAUDE MOSHER.

THIS tale I send, —

Read it ; read me.

Give me a friend,

And I'll give thee.



THE FÊTE, THE PRINCESS, AND THE ASTRONOMER.



HE was nine
years old, and
she ate rice
with two sticks.
You must not
think this was
bad manners, or

because she was too poor to own a knife
and fork; it was her parents' fault first,
and next her country's. It was the way
they all did in Japan. Her sticks, —
they call them "chop-sticks" over there,
though it is rather misleading, for they

don't eat chops as we do, — her sticks were very beautiful. They were carved sandal-wood at the handle end, and had her name inlaid in bronze. It was very convenient, I should think, to have anything so spicy as sandal-wood to eat with; for if her food was n't seasoned enough, she could eat with the sandal ends of her chop-sticks. I don't say she did this, but it is an idea that has occurred to me, — I say she *could* do it.

The name that was inlaid in bronze was Monotaro. It seems very hard at first that a little girl only nine years old should have such a name, — even Bridget or Sarah Jane would almost be better; but the meaning of Monotaro is n't so bad, for it is Little Peachling, and this little Japanese girl was very like her name. Besides that, she belonged to the royal

family. She was a little princess, although she did n't have a crown, — but then, she had those particularly lovely chop-sticks.

And now she was to have something else, — a birthday! Perhaps some people think they don't have birthdays in Japan, but they do, and a great many other things besides. And Monotaro's royal papa was going to give her a big fête in the palace gardens. You know what beautiful lanterns the Japanese have, — all the colors of sunrise; so you can imagine what a splendid fête could be given. To be sure, there would be no ice-cream, and it does n't seem as if there could be much of a fête without ice-cream, in spite of the lanterns; but then one must remember that it would be very difficult to eat ice-cream with chop-sticks.

Days and days were spent in preparing

for the birthday fête of little Monotaro. The excitement about it spread from the palace into the town, and from the town into the country, and then all through Japan. There was an especial reason for this, which even Little Peachling herself did not know till three days before the great event. It was that she was to be betrothed to a young Japanese nobleman, who was already ten years old; and naturally this made the occasion a national affair.

Monotaro had not seen this youth, — but that was not a strange thing in Japan; and she did not care, anyway. She only thought of the fête, and of the new pair of shoes she was going to wear, which were a smaller size than any she had been able to wear yet. They wear very odd shoes in Japan, — a sort of two-storied

shoe, and you live in the second story; but they are very tight, — indeed, much too tight, — and the only comfortable thing about them is that you don't need to wear over-shoes. I quite believe a little Japanese girl would faint if her maid brought her a pair of goloshes when she was going out, because there happened to be a pearly gray cloud in the azure sky.

Finally, all the preparations were finished, and the day of the fête arrived. It was the most beautiful day of the year. There was n't a single flaw in the fair blue heavens, as far as your eye could reach; and the Royal Court Astronomer, or the magician who occupies that post, — they call him the chief of the Weather Bureau here in America, because in a bureau you can never find what you want when you go to look for

it, — the Astronomer, I say, prophesied, when he had finished his breakfast, that it would be a "fair day."

This Astronomer was a very careful man: he not only believed you should count ten before you spoke, but also before you prophesied. His prophecies, therefore, had never failed; and on that account he was much beloved, and held in great awe by the Japanese people. When they had what we call "April weather," because it generally comes in May, this infallible magician always remained confined to his room with a cold in his head, which prevented his prophesying; and hourly bulletins of his condition were hung on a bamboo pole in front of his door, where the populace came in crowds to read them.

There was no doubt about the pleas-

antness of Monotaro's birthday. The sun got up fully ten minutes earlier than usual and wished her many happy returns. Everybody and everything loved Little Peachling. They could n't help it, she was so sweet and pretty as she pattered about in her tiny elevated shoes, with the dawn of day on her young cheeks, and the dawn of life in her young heart. Her brilliant black hair was rolled up and held in place by a long lacquer pin, the head of which was a tiny mirror; and high on top of that was perched a white sparrow's feather dyed emerald green. Her eyes had the pure slant of the royal family, and could be very coy and winning withal; and her lips, when she smiled, were irresistible, and, to tell the whole truth, very tempting to certain Japanese small boys who used to watch her from a distance.

The gown she wore was of white satin, embroidered all over with little sprigs of pink flowers and green leaves; and the soft green silk lining crept up over the hem at the bottom in a nice comfortable wadded roll, while a broad, pink pineapple-silk sash went around and around her waist, and was tied in a big flat bow at the back to sit on. This isn't the way she was dressed always; it is the way she was dressed for her birthday and the fête.

She came out of the house the first thing to see what the day was, and squatted right down on the piazza floor from pure delight. Even the Emperor himself was pleased with the weather, and sent a magnificent china bowl full of rice from the palace pantry, with his kindest regards, to the Astronomer.

Monotaro sat for some time in the middle of the piazza, looking around her. Once in a while she jolted herself up and down, and exclaimed something at each jolt which meant about the same as "Oh, *isn't* this lovely!" I am not telling you any of the Japanese words because so few people understand them, and they might make you laugh in the wrong place.

Finally Monotaro stood up, and then started down the steps to take a walk in the garden. In front of the palace was a field of red chrysanthemums. The day before, when Monotaro had walked in among them, they were only budded, and their little round tops with small tufts of pouting color seemed waiting to be kissed; but to-day, all of a sudden, they had burst into bloom, and their

great blossoms nodded around her head, and their curly petals seemed longing to embrace her as they brushed softly against her cheek, or stole, with their radiant color, about the pink of the pineapple sash.

From the chrysanthemums she passed on to a field, through which ran a small silvery stream filled for the fête with gold and silver fish; and these swam up and down in a long, regal procession over the smooth white pebbles which made the bottom of the stream. There was a rustic bridge, with a bronze dragon at each end, to cross on; and on the other side there were some pine-trees, and a level lawn of light green grass. This was where most of the entertainment was to take place.

There was a raised platform covered

with embroidery of gold thread on rose-color silk, and canopied with peacock feathers, where the royal family were to sit; and in the very centre a low blue-and-white-china seat for Little Peachling. There was another blue-and-white-china seat just like it hidden at one side; that was for the young prince after the betrothal. It was n't needed as yet. Over the platform, from tree to tree, was stretched a half-circle of prismatic lanterns, and tassels and jewels of all colors blended, hung from them. One end of this semi-circle ended in a pagoda, ablaze with red and gold, where, in the centre underneath the roof, reposed an idol made of malachite, with a moonstone stuck in the centre of its forehead. The other end of the semi-circle disappeared behind the top of a fountain, — a silver

dolphin, which seemed to be leaping up into the air from waves carved out of lapis lazuli.

Monotaro looked at it, and knew it was all for her. Somehow or other it made her feel self-conscious, — it seemed so much for so little a person. The pine-trees all had a bold appearance of pointing their needles at her, and when a soft breeze blew through them she was sure they giggled. She turned around and went back to the palace; and there she was very restless and miserable until the time for the fête to begin.

The hour was set in the latter part of the afternoon. Little bronze coins had been sent around among the Japanese nobility and people of importance, to invite them to be present. And it seemed as if they all must have accepted, there

was so great a crowd. The guests were arranged about the peacock-feather canopied platform. As it was rather warm, they all brought fans with them of the most varied and beautiful colors; and these waved softly to and fro, so that from a short distance the field of grass looked as if it were a field of flowers, over which hovered butterflies whose wings had been dyed by the gods.

The Princess, with the royal family, was to arrive from the palace at a certain hour; and twenty-nine minutes after the stated time, which is the proper thing everywhere, they were seen approaching by the rustic bridge over the stream. They were preceded by the royal band of nine players. Three beat skin-covered drums, three played upon wooden-topped ones, two blew shrilly through long

double pipes, and one drew a bow across a sort of miniature violin which had but one string. Their leader, the one with the single-stringed fiddle, had composed a new "air" in honor of the occasion, and it was received in solemn joy by the Emperor and his household. To be sure, the little gold fishes in the stream became alarmed and broke ranks; but who ever heard that a fish had a soul for music?

When the royal party were arranged on the platform, the guests stood up and bowed very low, and Little Peachling wanted to bow back, but they would n't let her, because she was a princess. But when she sat on the blue-and-white-china stool she stuck out her tiny feet and showed the new shoes a size smaller than her others. They could be seen

by every one on account of the platform, and were greatly admired by most of those present,—all but Monotaro's cousin, who was the same age, but only half-royal, and who blushed very red in the face, and sat down on her feet with her fan spread in front of her. She knew her own shoes were at least two sizes larger, and it was very mortifying to her Japanese pride.

Then the entertainment began.

One of the peacock feathers in the canopy was loose, and tickled the right ear and nose of the Empress; otherwise there was no mar upon the proceedings.

The chief feature was a juggler,—a really wonderful man. He was very thin and very tall and very plain-looking, but Monotaro thought him the most talented person she had ever seen, and greater even

than the leader of the band. First, he took a big paper and bamboo umbrella and balanced it perfectly on the tip end of his nose. Then he put a ball on top of the umbrella, and a chop-stick between the end of the handle and the end of his nose, and kept them all balanced and the ball spinning. Monotaro fairly wriggled on her seat in wondering pleasure. Next he balanced an open fan on his head, and open umbrellas in his hands, and a chop-stick on his under lip, and he marched around to music without making a blunder. He looked exactly like a toy man that was wound up. Monotaro did not hear the band at all, though she kept time with the juggler's movements with her tiny pinched feet. When this had been done long enough, he took two gilded eggs — one a sparrow's, a wee one, and the other

a large stork's egg—and tossed them high in the air, catching them first in one hand, then in the other. They went up and down so rapidly that they made gold streaks like sunshine. Monotaro was a little worried for fear—this being thrown high up in the air was so like flying—the eggs would hatch; but they did not, at least not then. And when the juggler took another and then another, until he had five eggs all going up into the air to different heights at once, and he catching all of them and not breaking one, Monotaro simply held her breath, and sat spell-bound, and even forgot all about her small shoes.

Still there was something more. The juggler dropped one of the smallest gold eggs down one of his long flowing sleeves, and a moment afterward a full-grown

sparrow, downy and joyful, flew out and off to the pine-trees.

Then Monotaro fairly screamed with delight, and danced her little feet up and down so hard she chipped off a bit of her china stool ; it flew straight into the eye of the Royal Astronomer, and he hurried home to prophesy hail.

Everybody present was overjoyed at the juggler's last trick. The guests opened and shut their fans, by way of applause, so long and so fiercely that the wind from them almost blew the royal family off the rose-colored platform. The Emperor ordered a bowl of rice, larger than that sent to the Astronomer in the morning, to be sent to the juggler, with a painting of His Majesty on rice-paper. The Empress inquired if he was married, and expressed her willingness to receive his wife at the

palace once a year; but the juggler was not married, and so, unfortunately, had to decline the honor. Soon the Emperor bade the band play again, for it was time for the arrival of the young prince to whom Monotaro was to be betrothed,—that is, it was twenty-nine minutes after the time set for his arrival.

Monotaro herself had forgotten there was such a person, and she wished she did not have to remember him. When she saw him she thought there was n't much to remember; for he was n't any taller than she, and had such very big feet! She felt sure she would much rather marry the juggler.

The Prince came with quite a large suite, including his father and mother. He wore a bright blue gown embroidered in yellow and brick red, and it did

not "go" at all with Monotaro's pink and green, and their feelings seemed to clash the same as their clothes. Still, even princesses have to be polite, so Monotaro went through the ceremony, although she was wondering all the time what had become of the juggler.

It had grown quite dark by this time, and while tea was being served the illuminations were started. The Prince and Monotaro sat facing each other on the two blue-and-white-china stools. The Emperor and Empress had withdrawn to one side during the ceremony. When the semi-circle of all-colored lanterns was lighted, the brilliantly-dressed little couple looked like two dusky dew-drops on which the sun was shining underneath a rainbow.

Behind, in the pine woods, there was such a glare of light from the gold and

silver lanterns, and bronze lights with jewelled reflectors, that the birds all woke up and sang, thinking the morning had come.

The stars looked dim in this splendid radiance, and seemed to be trying to escape notice; and even the moon herself was put quite out of countenance.

The silver dolphin spouted up a tall stream of water from its lapis lazuli sea, which looked like milk till it reached its zenith, and then when it toppled and fell, the variegated lines of the lanterns were reflected in its drops, so that it seemed to be scattering all the jewels of the world, from ruby to topaz, on the lawn beneath it.

Opposite, in front of the idol's pagoda, incense burned in a bronze brazier, and sent a thin bluish smoke drowsily up to the sky.

Then there was a dance.

Little Peachling was obliged to dance first with the Prince, but she did not feel like it ; and they did n't jump up and down in time. The truth of it was she could have gotten into jump with him if she had tried, but she did not try because she did not want to. The Prince had no ear for music, and could not, therefore, help matters himself ; and he blamed Monotaro, of course. He did not enjoy the dance ; and he must have felt that his fiancée was a very awkward little girl. She, meanwhile, was thinking how beautifully the juggler had danced, balancing all the time umbrellas and fans on his hands and head, instead of one nice little girl in his arms.

Suddenly, right in the middle of the dance, the Royal Astronomer appeared. No one had noticed him go away, but

they could n't help notice him appear, he did it so conspicuously.

He had been sitting in his home for some time, brooding over the brilliant reception and the success of the juggler. He was very jealous. He wanted to prophesy something awful, but he did n't dare, for fear it would n't come true. Then he made a discovery. He was looking at the walls of his room, where the heavens were painted, and the stars and moon and sun, and their different courses traced. All the days of the year were marked, and you could go on marking for one hundred years before the walls of the room would be entirely covered.

This was his discovery:—

The royal family had made a mistake of a whole week in the Princess's birthday. She would n't be ten years old till

seven days from that day. He lay flat down on his back on the hard floor of his room, and kicked up his heels in his pure Japanese joy. The betrothal would not be legal before she was ten years old, so all the ceremony was wasted, and the fête would have to be repeated. In the mean time he would see if a prophet could not manage in some way to out-shine, or at any rate to get rid of, a juggler. So he made known the facts to the Emperor.

The Emperor, realizing his royal position, showed no surprise, but looked as if he had known it all along ; people might have even believed this if it had not been for the Empress. She dropped her eleventh cup of tea, half full, right on the head of the Astronomer, who knelt before her, and the cup was cracked, while the Empress fainted ; but, then, she was a woman.

Monotaro, when she understood, was ecstatically glad. She showed her girlish joy by overturning the young Prince's china stool; and when he fell, she could not resist smiling a bit at his feet. All this was rude. As for the Prince, he was as glad as Little Peachling, although he was polite enough to conceal his pleasure; but when he went away with his parents and his suite, having promised to return a week from that day for a repetition of the betrothal ceremony, he made up his mind he never would see her again. Even his father and mother were not altogether satisfied with the behavior of Monotaro, and spoke to each other of several young girls of royal blood who might be to their minds more worthy of their offspring; and before they reached home the Prince fell in love with the

daughter of his mother's first Hair Dressing Lady-in-Waiting, — which shows the democratic tendencies even of Japan.

Little Peachling went straight home to bed. She thought mistakes like this were so nice. It was very kind of the Royal Astronomer, too; she hoped she would remember to thank him the next morning. She buried her face in her pillow for a little while and thought about things; then, just before she went to sleep, she turned over and decided to herself that she would n't marry the Prince, — she positively *would n't*! If she married anybody at all, it would be that juggler, — for all the world just as if she were a little American girl.



AN UNCHRONICLED MIRACLE.

CHESTER, ENGLAND, May, 1889.

TO

WALTER PATER.

YOUR name I dare have written
Above so wee a thing,
Remembering the kitten
Was let look on the king.



AN UNCHRONICLED MIRACLE.



RUTH, the daughter of Leah and Simon—but Simon had died when she was only a year old—lived on the outskirts of Jerusalem longer ago than we can remember, even our oldest inhabitant.

People did not use "A.D." or "B.C." in those days before and after dates. And there were no great

surgeons established in the cities to help and cure the lame and halt. So little Ruth went about on two clumsy crutches, when she went about at all.

She was one of the poor children, although she was never seen among the ragged groups of small squalid humanity that resorted to certain favorite alleys, or ensconced themselves in specially popular corners. Ruth had only two friends. One was an aged blind woman who had her home outside the city gates on the great road. She had sat all day in the doorway of her little hut ever since Ruth could remember, and where, Ruth thought, if she thought about it at all, she had sat ever since the world began, and would sit till it ended. Her other friend was a dove. It was a puny, half-dead nestling, cast away by the dealers, which she found one

day outside the temple where her mother had sent her to beg.

Leah herself had begged before she became bedridden, and had liked it ; but Ruth hated begging. If she had not been so lame she could have worked. She used to dream of being well, and of being the waiting-maid to some lovely lady ; but as it was, she had to use both her hands on her crutches, and so could not even fetch and carry at the wells. There was a time when she entreated her mother that she would not force her to beg, but it did no good ; and by and by she learned to hide her tears when at home, and only shed them before old Naomi, who cried with her, or the dove, who paid no attention.

Even the dove knew how cruel the mother was, for it had often to fly straight

out of the window to escape from the missiles which the woman threw about; and it always kept as far as possible from the bed when it was in the room. Ruth had taken the little sick bird and nursed it, and fed to it half of her own small portion of daily food, until it was well, and grew to be a beautiful white bird, large enough to carry in her arms like a babe. Keeping the dove made old Leah very angry. She said it would bring them ill-luck, and that it was robbing her to feed it. But for the first time in her life Ruth would not give in; she felt she would die rather than part with her dove, which she loved as she loved nothing else, — not even Naomi. It grew quite tame, and came to her when she called, and perched on her shoulder; and it would eat out of her hand; and when she cuddled it against

her soft neck, under her chin, it would coo away most comfortingly.

It never left her long; and when she hobbled about on her crutches, it either flew a little way ahead or else walked beside her with a haughty little strut, and gave sudden superior glances on all sides, as if to say, "I am the body-guard of the princess! sing, all ye birds, and bloom, all ye flowers! for, lo, the little Princess of the Jews approacheth!" There was that royal air and dignity about the bird.

Nobody in Jerusalem paid any attention to Ruth nowadays. Once they had been sorry for her, but they had become accustomed to seeing her about after a time; and the children never had troubled themselves concerning her at all. Their shapely young bodies were clad mostly in rags more or less dirty, — generally more, — and

their unscrupulous eyes looked out from underneath tousled heads of coarse dark hair ; but Ruth's pitiful, twisted little figure was always cleanly clothed, for she stayed in bed at Naomi's while Naomi herself washed and dried the child's garment. It had been quite colorless for ever so long, —almost the same as Ruth's pale, sad face. And Ruth's shining dark hair was fine and smooth, and her eyes were lustrous and large, and very often beaded with a tear or two on the curling lashes. She never heeded the other children. In a way she was grateful for being let alone ; at home, where she was not, it was so much worse. Really, she could ask for nothing better. But she would not let the boys harm her dove. Once one of them had thrown a stone and hit it, and Ruth was furious. She lifted one of her

crutches, her face scarlet with indignation, and the boy always believed she would have struck him if he had not been very much frightened and run away. She sank down trembling all over when he left her, and stretched out her arms toward her dove, and spoke to it between her sobs. After that no one dared touch the bird. And shortly afterward, when, the small boy, who had never been able to see well, lost his sight entirely, the other children decided among themselves in a dark corner of their favorite alley that it was most likely the dove had picked the boy's eyes out. This made them fear both the bird and its mistress. They made up all sorts of weird stories about her, and repeated them so often that they finally believed them themselves; and they grew so afraid of Ruth they ran away

whenever she appeared, or peeked out at her with startled eyes from behind the walls. This was worse than their teasing. She felt as if she were a leper, and the first day it happened hurried home to look at herself in the bit of a mirror over her mother's bed.

Ruth's loneliness became greater than ever before, and she was, if possible, meeker with her cruel mother, which only made Leah the more cross and ugly. Her child's very submissiveness annoyed her. Ruth's presence acted upon her like a conscience, — something it was not likely she had ever possessed. The girl's calmness, her peaceful lack of complaint against her crippled existence, her living her sorrowful and empty life quietly, and even at times happily, — all were beyond the comprehension of the woman, whose own selfish

life of doing what she pleased had brought her where she was. She could not understand any one's being good like Ruth, and she daily told her it was all put on to deceive her own mother ; that she knew she kept to herself half that she got in the begging, and was bad enough when she was once out of sight. Sometimes she would warn Ruth that the rabbi in the synagogue said that the Angel-Jehovah was coming again to the earth, and if he found her so cruel and bad to her mother he would punish her perhaps forever. Ruth used to listen and shudder, and at night have dreadful dreams. Her cheeks grew thin, and her great eyes hollow, and the little fingers which clutched so tightly the worn crutches were as delicate as the stem of a flower.

Naomi noticed how much weaker she

was. Ruth did not go out to see her nearly so often as she used to. Many times when the child started she would be tired out half way, and either turn back or lie down and rest under a palm-tree that grew close by the road before she could go on. She would put down her crutches for the dove to perch on, — she wanted it by her, and the tree was too high up, quite out of reach; and she would rest her head beside the dove, so it could brush her cheek with its wing, and she would look up at the blue, blue sky. Sometimes she wished she had wings like her bird, so that she might fly, and possibly get a little closer to where she believed heaven was. She used to imagine that, perhaps, she might see at least the soles of the feet of some of the angels. She had once even thought of climbing the

palm-tree, — that would lift her up a little nearer, and she might see more than she did now; but she remembered her crutches, and reminded herself that she could not climb.

Ruth used to fancy the sky was all sorts of things as she looked up at it, — sometimes the dress of a beautiful rich lady, and the clouds around were the trimmings, and the sun was the jewel she wore on her breast; but she never could fancy the lady herself. When she tried to imagine the face, she always saw Naomi's; and although Naomi was kind, she was old and not beautiful. Sometimes the sky was a great turquoise set in a ring, which, if once you kissed it, kept you from scolding all the rest of your life. Sometimes it was the sea and the clouds were ships, and she and the dove were in one, and Naomi

was in another ; and if there was a dark cloud anywhere, her mother was in that. Then she used to watch them as they sailed, and wonder where they were going, and which would get there first.

One day, after Ruth was quite rested, she started up from under the tree to go on and see Naomi. She wanted to ask about her dove ; it was sick and she was worried. It would not fly about at all nor walk beside her, but sat on her shoulder, huddled up and moping. She had fed it with the stamens of lilies, which she had heard were good, and she had bathed it in the pool, and she had even taken it to the synagogue under her gown, but still it grew worse instead of better. She was hobbling along the road when she saw ahead of her, just a short distance off, a small baby rolling with much glee in the dust, and close

behind it a large flock of sheep coming, and no shepherd in sight. What should she do? What could *she* do?

If she could get into the road and reach the baby before the sheep were upon it, would she be able to get back again? Would not both of them be trampled on? Never mind; she would try. She shrugged her shoulder to make the dove safer, and then, lifting the weight of her poor little body on to the arms of her crutches, she threw herself forward again and again until she reached the smiling and unconscious infant. She crouched down to shield the little one as well as she could, and one of her crutches fell heavily; but she only noticed that the drove of sheep had separated as they came to her, and were passing her and the baby by on both sides. The mother of the child came soon and

took up her infant. Then Ruth kneeled down to take up her crutch, and underneath it she found her precious dove lying quite still. She looked at it for a moment, and then up at the sky, to see if it were still blue, and then behind at the sheep and their tardy shepherd, and then ahead at the mother joyfully carrying her babe, and then down again at her dove. She took it into her two hands; it did not move. She bent over it and sobbed aloud; her body shook with the grief that rolled the tears out of her eyes and down the hollows of her cheeks. Finally, when her burst of sorrow had subsided, she began to wonder what she should do. She decided to go on to Naomi; perhaps she could bring the bird back to life. Before she started she drew out from somewhere about her gown a tiny vial, — it held one

drop of attar of roses ; this Naomi had given to her during the feast of the pass-over four years before. It had been her one possession, her one treasure, her one jewel. She tore off the skin that was tied about the opening and spilled the drop on the breast of the dove. Then she laid the bird in the bosom of her dress, next to her throbbing heart, and gathering herself up, started on down the road.

Ruth was weak and tired and sorrowful, but she thought there would be help and comfort from Naomi. So on she went until she came to the empty hut ; no one was there. It was the first time in her life that Naomi had failed her. Her, at least, she had always found when she wanted her ; but now there was no sign of any one anywhere, and Ruth was almost exhausted. She sat down on Naomi's seat, and taking

out her dove kissed it again and again, and wept some more tears. Now she was quite alone. Her dove lifeless, Naomi gone, only her mother left, — she was indeed alone !

After a while Ruth started up suddenly, remembering her mother had bidden her be back by a certain time. She must hurry or she would be late, and then — It made her shudder to think what she would hear if she were late ; and perhaps she would be beaten again, for sometimes she stood by the bed and was beaten on the back by her mother with her hard bare fists, the knuckles of which were like the heads of nails. She laid the dove back on her warm bosom and began her homeward journey. She was so tired she was afraid. When she came to the palm-tree where she had rested before, she felt

as if she could not drag herself one step farther ; but she did not stop, — she did not dare to stop. She must go on, and go on. Her face was wet with tears ; her fragile hands were stained with the blood the long handling of the clumsy crutches had drawn from the tender palms. The dove lay like a little tomb upon her breast. The sun fell burning upon her forehead, while a cool breeze waved a stray lock of hair across her temples. Then, when she was only a short distance from the city gates, she heard a distant singing and shouting on the road.

Ruth threw back her head and listened. She turned about, and waited and watched. She could see a cloud of dust which shone gold in the sun on the top of the hill where she had met the flock of sheep, and she thought there was something also that

looked like the beginning of a crowd or a procession. She heard shouts of "Hosannah! Hosannah in the highest!" She was thrilled through and through without understanding why; she forgot that she was tired. They were coming nearer. She could see both men and women, and, yes, children too, in the multitude, and all were running and singing and shouting for joy. Up over the valley of Jehoshaphat they came, and the long line stretched back almost to the slope of the Mount of Olives. What made them so happy? She could never be happy again, and she leaned her face down to her dove till she touched it with her cheek.

Now they were quite near. And those ahead were laying the goldy dust by throwing down palm-leaves and branches,

and even casting off their white cloaks that they might strew them thick on the road. Why did they do this? What was coming? Was it the governor? No; for this was no royal procession. There were no gorgeous robes nor men on horseback. These were just the people, the common people, her own people, and they were on foot. Why, now she could see the first ones plainly; some of them she knew by sight. There was James, that kind fishmonger who had once given her a beautiful pearly shell; and there was Rebecca, who sometimes let her braid her wonderful long black hair with the stem and flower of a red-brown lily; and she recognized many others among the hurrying company. She drew to one side of the path to let the great crowd pass.

Some were almost in front of her when she looked up and saw Whom they were bringing.

It was a Man riding on an ass, with a little colt alongside. Some one more beautiful than she had ever dreamed of. It was not a warrior in mail, it was not a prince in purple, but a Man, full of a simple purity and calmness that even the child felt; eyes which, so it seemed to Ruth, could see the whole world; lips which she thought must have kissed heaven; hands that she believed could help her more than any crutch. Who was he? Where had he come from? Where was he going? She thought she saw a cloud of the gold dust shining behind his head. She felt strong and quite rested. He was almost beside her.

The crowd was shouting, throwing up their arms, and waving their palms, and the Man was smiling tenderly.

Ruth managed to push herself into the road, nearer the procession, with her dove in her arms. Then she lifted it up in her two hands before Him, and cried with the others,—

“Hosannah! Hosannah! Hosannah! in the highest!”

The Man turned and looked at them, and out of her upstretched hands flew the dove and circled around the head of Him on the ass. Ruth saw. She threw herself down by the side of the beast, gratitude flooding her heart. And a beatitude was born in her face, as she caught the hem of the rider's robe in her fingers and kissed it.

Tears of unutterable gladness gushed

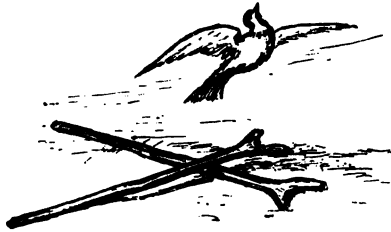
from her brilliant eyes, the color of royal damask blazed in her cheeks, and she stood up straight and whole, gazing on the face above her. Then the multitude bore Him on, while she stood immovable watching him, seeing no one, not even Naomi waving a palm, from her own restful tree, in the summer sun.

Where the road bent He turned around, —it was what she had waited for. Then He passed on out of sight, and the dove flew straight on before Him.

Ruth stood still in the road, straight and whole; she was lame no longer. But she was not surprised. She looked down at her crutches where they had fallen at her feet in the shape of a cross; but when she stooped to lift them up, they faded away like a shadow.

And next? Her mother — surely now

even she would rejoice, and never be cruel again. But the dreary, bare room was empty, and the bit of glass over the bed reflected nothing; for Leah, the wife of Simon the stone layer, was dead. And still Ruth was not surprised.



RAPHAEL'S BLACK DAYS.

LONDON, June, 1890.

TO

MRS. JOHN WOOD.

WITH so much art,
With so much heart,
With humor too;
'Tis hard to find
In human kind
The friends like you.



RAPHAEL'S BLACK DAYS.



AVE you ever been in an orphan asylum? Everything is very neat, and the furniture is always arranged just so, and one room is very like another. Down-

stairs there are rows of oblong tables with benches and benches along beside them. And up-stairs there are rows of little white beds, with just enough bare board for a pair of small bare knees between them.

And there are rows of little children,— girls in blue dresses and large white pinafores, boys in gray clothes and broad collars,— who go, all in a line, to be washed, and to be fed, and to be put away between the cool sheets at night. In between times they study lessons out of books— how two and two are not five— and play. The younger ones play the longest; the older ones study the most. It is always the way. People never play when they grow up; they can't bear dolls, and they are too big to be really good at hide-and-go-seek.

All the children seem to look alike. It is rather funny if you just see them once and don't think,— so many pinafores, and so many little baggy trousers; but if you stop to think, you know the reason why it is: they are orphans. To

be sure, they all appear quite happy; but of course it can't be the same as it would be if they were not fatherless and motherless.

The nicest parts of these big homes are the grounds about them. About St. Joseph's there is a very large lawn, and over in one corner a clump of trees and shrubbery. A crunchy gravel path leads straight to it from the porch, so that you could not miss it, — even if you were blind. This was one of the things that made Raphael feel it did you no good to see. You could find your way to the shrubbery quite the same, and you could hear the birds quite as well, and could touch the flowers, and smell them, so that you knew quite what they were like. Why did people pity him? Why did some cruel children tease him, because he was blind?

What difference did it make to see? People were very stupid. Perhaps they would see more if they were blind themselves. This is the way he felt, though of course he could n't have written it out nor told you in so many words, he was too little for that.

Some of the children stumbled on him one June day, out in the corner, under his favorite syringa-bush. He was as usual "talking to himself," as they called it. He sat in front of a bunch of the sweet blossoms from the bush over his head, and each side of him he had placed separate sprays on the grass. He seemed to be talking to these sprays, but really they were representing two people whom his imagination pictured to him. This was Raphael's favorite game, which the other orphans laughed at, and thought very

silly. They only allowed him to play it because he was blind. They sometimes, when they had nothing better to do, would stand by, and watch him, and listen. When he insisted that these people of his little brain were really there, that he could see them, the children would jump about and shriek with laughter, it was so funny! for they weren't there of course; and if they were, how could he see them when he was blind. Oh, wasn't he fun! especially when there were not enough to play hide-and-go-seek, and there was nothing else to do.

It was a boy and girl who found him this time. And the boy was his rival, and the girl the one he had asked to be his sweetheart only two weeks before.

"Here's Raphael," they both shouted, coming around the syringa-bush.

"What are you doing?" asked the little girl, whose name was Katharine.

"I'm having tea with Cecilia and Samuel. *Don't!*" Raphael cried, as he felt Kath'rin sitting down very hard beside him, and therefore upon one of the sprays of syringa. "Don't! you're a-sitting on Cecilia;" and he tried to make her get up.

"Where?" asked Kath'rin, stoically.

"Why there, where you are. Don't you see her? Get up!"

"No, I don't see any one," continued Kath'rin blandly, and making herself more comfortable.

"Nor I," added her companion, sitting down on the other side of the little blind fellow.

"Now you're a-sitting on Samuel," cried Raphael, his eyes filling. Was he never to be allowed to play with his friends

in peace! What would Cecilia and Samuel think of his treating them so, and letting them be sat on. They would begin to laugh at him, too, for being blind; and so far, though he had known them for ever so long, they had never noticed that he could not see, — or if they had they hid it, for they never had let him know they thought him different from any one else.

“Pshaw!” said the boy, “you’re only pretending.”

“I’m not pretending,” said Raphael, choking up, “and won’t you *please* get off my friends?”

“Oh, he’s going to cry!” exclaimed Kath’rin, becoming a little alarmed, especially as when any one else cried she always did too. “Let’s go, Jack; we mustn’t mind him, he’s only a blind boy.” And they went off together, and left him. The

children always did leave him sooner or later, somehow or other they never took him away with them.

Raphael winked the tears out of his eyes and apologized to his friends. He was very sorry, but he could not help it; he hoped they would n't mind. They were still there, he could see them quite plain. Samuel was dressed in soft stuff like when you felt the top of a thistle, and had big eyes, and such nice curly hair; and Cecilia was dressed in a smooth thin dress like a petal of a rose, and her hair was straight and in such a long braid, with a flower in it, and a ring on her finger. She had a sweet mouth with rounded lips, more like a flower at night, but quite as beautiful as Sister Terèsa's, who sometimes kissed him. He could n't have told any one how fond of Cecilia and Samuel

he was; and yet it was so strange! he could only *see* them,—he had never touched them as he had all his other friends.

“Now we'll have tea,” Raphael said.
“Kath'rin is not a kind little girl. I'm glad I am blind, else she might have chose me instead of Jack, when I asked her to be my sweetheart. Kath'rin must wear pink and yellow, for she is what pink and yellow together are,—she is cruel. Perhaps you think Cecilia, because I am blind, that I don't know about colors; but I do. Sister Terèsa helped me. She and I made them out together. She told me the leaves were green; and I touched them, and I knew how they looked. Green is the same as when you are hot and somebody nice fans you. Is n't that green? And blue,—I found out blue; blue is like when you are tired and happy, and Sister Terèsa

takes you up in her arms and holds you. Your mother would if you had one; only you know none of us have any mothers, — we're different. Yellow is like when you play and are glad, but purple is like when you are hurt or are sorry. And pink, don't you love pink Cecilia? Pink's when you kiss some one you love very much on the lips, softly. Then there's white and black. They are the hardest. White's when you hear a bird sing early in the morning; and black, — I'll whisper this just to you two, and you must never tell the others or they'd tease me, — black is when you are blind."

There never were such sympathetic listeners as Cecilia and Samuel. They always were quite still, and listened, and let you do all of the talking.

But Raphael was tired. He said good-

by to his two imaginary companions, and stretched his little body straight out on the grass, resting his head on the bunch of syringas. The baggy gray trousers were crowded up, and showed a bit of bare leg between them and the top of his stocking. He crooked up his knees and clasped his hands around them,—little hands so sensitive that they seemed to vibrate when touched, like the strings of a harp.

A fashionable butterfly in brilliant yellow, which ought to have made the sun laugh, hastened carelessly over him on her way to visit a rose on the other side of the syringa-bush. Raphael half smiled; he felt the fanning of her gauzy wings. He was thinking of Cecilia and Samuel, and Kath'rin and Jack. He was thinking of colors and things; of people and orphans. Everything and everybody were so differ-

ent, it was very puzzling. He wanted to ask "why," and "how;" but he didn't know in what way to put the questions, and he couldn't have answered them if he had. It was very tiresome, and he was getting muddled; so he made up his mind to stop thinking of those things and to go to sleep.

When Raphael wanted to go to sleep he always thought of a garden of flowers. First, there was a great, beautiful bed of one kind, one sort of scent; then one of another kind and another scent; and then one of another, and so on. He always intended to imagine a hundred, but he never stayed awake long enough. He never yet had reached the fifth bed. This time he was right in the middle of the second, with his face in a mass of roses that were velvety, and heavy with dew-

drops, and sweeter than all words, with his two arms clasped about all their stems (really they were his legs crooked up, but he was so drowsy he did n't know) when he fell quite asleep. He did not hear Sister Terèsa coming with a stranger,— a lady whose gown rustled, and whose voice was low and sweet, and whose touch was gentle and kind. She was neither young nor beautiful, but she was better than either,— she was good; Sister Terèsa saw that. She was telling the lady about Raphael.

“ His father and mother were Italians who lived in one of those dreadful quarters of a city where the poor and wretched emigrants from their country gather. There was a terrible fever raging, which carried away the parents, and left the child behind, only a month old. A Sister of

Mercy found the tiny baby and took it home with her, and nursed it back to life; but after a time it was discovered that the fever had left him blind. He was brought to us when he was three years old, and has been with us ever since; and I am very fond of him. It is a sad case, for he is a wonderful child,—a dreamy boy, an artist or a poet in the bud; and how can he ever blossom here? We do all that we can for him, and he is easily made happy; but I am always wondering about, and fearing for, his future."

The lady was listening intently, glancing from Sister Terèsa to the sleeping boy.

"All that you tell me,"—she spoke after a moment's silence between them,—"pleases me. I have determined to try to do some good with my money before I die. I don't want to leave it all behind me in a

will. I want to see the good it does, and enjoy it. I decided to come here and see if there was some one I could and would adopt, or any one with some especial talent I could educate. Here is a case where it would be a blessing to provide something for this dear little fellow's mind and life. I don't know about adopting him. I never thought of a boy! I'm not sure I should know what to do with a boy. But I will think it over; I can tell better after I know him. I'll send for him tomorrow, if you will let me, to come and spend the day with me."

"I know you will love him, and want to keep him with you," said Sister Terèsa, smiling.

"Perhaps you're right; yes, I think you are even now. You will miss him."

"Yes, I shall; but it is different missing

any one when you know life is being made better and larger for him. And you will let me see him often, won't you? I think I ought to tell you something," she added, lowering her voice unconsciously.

Mrs. Manning looked up questioningly. A great light seemed to come into her face as she listened to what Sister Terèsa was telling her.

"Send for a specialist at once," she said; "perhaps it is not too late. How glorious if we can give him back his sight. He would love a person who helped him to see, would he not?"

"Oh, yes, he is very grateful; but I believe he will love you, any way. I think you will understand him. He is not like other children."

"No, he is not; poor little fellow!" murmured Mrs. Manning, leaning over

Raphael and dropping a tear, which looked like a dew-drop where it fell on a syringa blossom. "Let us go without waking him."

It was quite the happiest day of Raphael's life that far, — his day with Mrs. Manning. He had heard of princesses, and he had decided that she must be one; and he chose her for his. She laughed, and said she was too old to be a princess; but he was sure if she was old, to be old was to be beautiful, and all the nicer when one was a princess. She had kissed him, exactly like Sister Terèsa, and her voice was soft music; he knew she was lovely.

The child lay back in a big chair full of cushions that sank in when you touched them, and held a long-haired, furry kitten

in his lap, while Mrs. Manning told him the most interesting and delightful stories. Some made you cry at the end, and some made you laugh; and he could not decide which he liked best, and that made it all the nicer to have both.

After that, Raphael had some strange things to eat, — fruits that were slippery on the outside, and thick and sweet inside, with heavy cream to pour over them; and his princess talked to him while he was eating, and took some herself at the same time. It was quite like when you played “house,” only better, and real.

When Raphael went home he was driven in a carriage which was softer even than the little white cat, — and so big, that, stretch out his hand as far as he might in front of him, he could not touch anything, although

he knew very well that the coachman and footman were up in front somewhere.

It was all more wonderful than anything the boy had ever imagined or dreamed; and as soon as he had greeted Sister Terèsa he hurried off to the syringa-bush, to tell it all over to Cecilia and Samuel. It was the first whole day he could remember that he had not seen them. He thought of this with a small pang, for he did not want them to feel hurt, and he knew they were sensitive. He was afraid he would have felt hurt if he were in their place; and he always judged them by himself, as was natural. Sometimes people judge others by themselves when they ought not to. But then we must not begin to criticise; so many people do so many things they ought not to do.

Sister Terèsa sent for the specialist, and

he came, and said it was not too late. Raphael was brave and quite willing, to please Sister Terèsa and his princess ; and that is how he happened to go to the hospital.

Sister Terèsa was with him most of the time, and Mrs. Manning came to see him every day ; and if he ever was left alone Cecilia and Samuel came. Raphael was sorry his princess could never meet them, but they always went out just as she came in.

Raphael was surprised when he found the operation was done. He could only remember going to sleep very suddenly, without having to think of anything at all. Now he knew that his eyes hurt, and that they were bandaged all the time ; but he did not mind so long as the bandage kept out of the way of his nose. This was

because he had every day the sweetest flowers. His princess brought him violets, and mignonette, and sweet peas; and Sister Terèsa brought him big bunches of blossoms and branches from his dear syringa-bush in the shrubbery. He could lie for hours touching them delicately, tenderly, wondering if when he saw, they would really be as beautiful as he imagined. Down in the bottom of his heart he did not believe they would be; and Cecilia and Samuel agreed with him. There was something, however, in the fact that nobody else did.

The month that Raphael was to be kept in a dark room stretched into six weeks and then seven. The success of the operation began to look doubtful. Finally, the doctor determined the time had come, if it ever was coming, to test the eyes. The

night before the bandage was to be taken off and the light let into the room, Raphael was in so great a state of excitement he found it harder than ever before to go to sleep. He was almost through the ninety-ninth bed, he believed, and in another instant would have been in the hundredth, when he forgot it all.

The morning of the test, Sister Terèsa came in to have a talk with Raphael. She thought it was best that he should be prepared a little for the wonderful difference that was to come into his life. She knew how the beautiful affected him ; and she was afraid if he suddenly found some things were more beautiful than others, his preference would be given to those that were loveliest without regard to which were the best. She did not wish him to feel the cruelty of disappointment

in appearance. She wanted to warn him beforehand not to depend on them, or to expect too much from them, or to judge by them. She thought of people especially, and at the moment of Mrs. Manning. She feared he might be disappointed in finding her not beautiful, as she was not, for her features were irregular and lacked grace; but her face was most kind and full of intelligence. She knew the disappointment would not last, and that he would soon love her for herself; but she would try to guard against any unpleasant first impression, for Mrs. Manning's sake as well as Raphael's.

Sister Terèsa began to explain how some people to look at were not as pleasing as others, though they might be more pleasing to know. You could not always tell at first. Raphael interrupted her to

say he did n't see what good the eyes were then, and that you could always tell right by the touch.

Sister Terèsa did not think of herself. It was not a habit of hers. She was used to thinking of others. She did not know she was beautiful, although she was, with her soft brown hair smoothed down on each side her forehead beneath the pure linen band that was bound across it, her serene blue-gray eyes and her restful mouth, and a skin as white as the ivory crucifix she wore on her breast. She had known once that one person thought her beautiful ; but all that had been a sin, and it was forgotten now, — forgotten.

And it was Sister Terèsa whom Raphael saw first. The doctor stood behind him by the window, adjusting the light, and

telling the sister when to remove the bandage.

There was first a strange mist, then a dancing of things about him, and then — Raphael saw! He was dazzled; his eyes were big and staring; he was frightened. Then he rested these eyes on the calm, perfect face of the woman leaning over him. He reached up and touched her with his trembling fingers; then he threw both arms about her neck and wept. But tears were bad for him, and had to be stopped, so he managed to choke them down. He could not see the objects in the room fast enough, and he had to touch everything to make sure they were what his eyes suggested; but he always came back to Sister Terèsa.

After a while the room was darkened again, — there must not be too great a

strain on the eyes at first, but the next day the bandage would be taken off for the last time. Then, when it was black again, and they had left him alone to rest, Raphael had a queer surprise, — he could not see Cecilia and Samuel. He *felt* they were there in some sort of way, sympathizing with him; but try as hard as he could, he could not see them. He could see Sister Terèsa just as she looked with the light on her face leaning over him, but not Cecilia and Samuel. He could not understand it; when he tried to go to sleep he had another surprise: he was very tired, and he fell a-dreaming in the very first bed of flowers, only it was so different from what it had ever been before he concluded it must be really the hundredth, and he had begun at the wrong end.

The next day Mrs. Manning was com-

ing. The doctor had thought it was best for Raphael to see only Sister Terèsa at first, who was calm and quiet, and Mrs. Manning had been extremely nervous. She came with a great bunch of red roses, full of joy over the success of the operation, and herself removed the bandage.

Raphael knew it was she,—he had heard her sweet voice. He opened his eyes, and the mist cleared quicker, and he saw plainer than yesterday; but he shut them again quickly, with his little hand over them.

“There must be too much light,” said Mrs. Manning.

“Yes, or the change was too sudden,” said Sister Terèsa.

“Poor little eyes,” whispered his princess, bending over Raphael in his great chair. She gathered the petals of some

of the roses into her hand and bathed his forehead and face with them. He lifted his hand and touched her cheek, and then opened his eyes, and held up his head to be kissed.

And Sister Terèsa, in the window, saw he had touched the soul of his princess, and knew that his danger was passed.



THE KING'S THRONE.

BUSHEY, HERTS., September, 1889.

TO

OSCAR WILDE.

O "Happy Prince" ! lay down your golden quill,
And leave one page in children's lore ungemmed,
That, tellers of less lovely tales, we still
May add our storied jewel uncondemned.



THE KING'S THRONE.



FRANCE is the country where the tall poplar-trees show the silver side of their giddy leaves, and where the sun shines most of the time, and where lilies are carved on the statues and palaces.

Jacques' home was not far from Paris, — near enough, indeed, for him to have been there twice when he was only twelve years old. He was very poor, because his

parents were. It's odd, but that is not an unusual reason. His parents did not even own a donkey to put to a cart and swear at, like all really well-to-do peasants.

Beside the road, just beyond the first turning, and within walking distance for even the more or less uncertain legs of a three-year-old, — for it was then he began to go to it, — was a tall, bare crucifix. Jacques' father could remember when it had been painted with very bright and beautiful colors; but myriad rains had washed away even the cruel stains that fell from the briar crown, and countless summer suns had faded the crudely tinted body, and many angry storms had softened the outline of the drooping head.

For several seasons a little bird had built its nest in an angle of the cross, and her nestlings had fluttered out into the

great, wicked world from one of the half opened, nail-pierced hands.

Jacques loved this crucifix, not because he was a religious boy, — for he was not; he knew nothing about religion, — but because he loved kings and queens and princes, and some one had told him the letters on the scroll at the top of the cross meant “The King of the Jews.” The only stories he had ever been told were about these wonderful people; and they had always, in the stories, done wonderful things. This was a king, and that was why he loved him. He never puzzled himself about why he was on the cross, or what the cross was there for, and no one explained it to him; and it would not have done any good if they had, for he never understood explanations. It was there; that was sufficient for Jacques. And it did

not frighten him when his mother said it would not be there long, that the time was coming when it would be cut down. He simply felt she did not know.

Jeanne Barot was different from her child. In the first place, she hated the crucifix. She never would tell him anything about it; what little he knew, he learned from other persons. She did not believe in it; but that was not surprising to Jacques, for she did not believe in kings. Jacques did. If there was no king, what was there? Jacques felt then there was nothing, and the thought was awful. There must be a king, — there could not be nothing. Poor Jacques needed some person to look up to, to worship, for he had a large bump of reverence on his solid young head, and he had never heard of the Lord; for Jeanne of course did not

believe there was a Lord. She believed vegetables grew to be sold, and that life was stupid without some sort of quarrelling somewhere; that her husband was a fool, and the King of France a dog of an aristocrat. Aristocrat with her meant everything that was bad, or refined. She had one note of womanliness in her, — her love for her child. Not a tender devotion, but the instinctive love of a mother, which did not make her kind or help her to understand him. She protected him from everything but herself, played with him in a rough sort of way when she was happy, and was affectionate with him at times. She thought him a dull boy, and it made her angry to hear him talk about a king.

Jeanne despised the crucifix on the road, and deemed neither it, nor anything con-

nected with it, sacred. Once a pretty, sad young girl, with a tiny baby in her arms, had hung upon the cross a little turquoise heart, and then gone slowly down the road, leaving Jacques astonished by her tears, and wanting to ask her if she knew his king. He had been so quiet, lying flat on the ground at one side, the wanderer had not noticed him. Neither did his mother see him when she passed by later. She did not know why she looked up at the crucifix, she seldom did,—it always “put her out ;” but something impelled her to look this time, and she saw the quaint charm. If she did not take it some one else would, she immediately reasoned. It was much better to have an honest woman like herself take it, who would wear it to some advantage, than to have the first common tramp find it, only to sell to some

one as low as himself. So she went boldly up and took down the little blue and silver heart, and put it in her bosom beneath her neckerchief, and then went home.

Jacques stood in front of her that night, and looked straight into her eyes, and said, —

“ I saw you take the lady's heart away from the king.”

Jeanne did not understand at first; but when she did, her face flushed very red, and she slapped him hard on the cheek — it stung for three whole minutes afterward — and sent him to bed. He never again dared speak of the heart; but she never dared to wear it. This had happened long before the second visit to Paris.

But if Jeanne despised Jacques' king, she hated the other one, — the one he had never seen; who lived in Paris, and who

went to the theatre, and who played with his pretty wife at being dairyman and maiden; who, his father said, was grinding them down to death, though Jacques could never see that any one hurt them half as much as they hurt others,—the cat, for instance, which, whenever they saw, they *kicked*; and the neighbors, with most of whom they had fought at some time or other.

Jacques loved this king as well as his own, although he had not seen him. The last time he was in Paris, when he asked who had built the wonderful houses as big as hills, and who had put up the splendid stone figures of men and horses, and who had made the beautiful fountains to flow like rivers, he had been answered, “The king,” for all. The one who had done all this was the one to

love, the one to look up to, so Jacques thought.

When Jacques came back home after that visit, he stood under the cross by the road, just where its shadows slanted across him before the sun set, and looked at the familiar face that drooped there, and wondered where were the fountains He had made play and the palaces He had built; they must be somewhere certainly, for He too was a king. Had not the man in the long black cloak told him so, and had said besides that He had died to help those people He was king over? — at least, that was what Jacques thought he said, though he confessed he did not understand it. He did wish his king had worn a jewelled crown instead of one of thorns; but he never wondered why He had not, — he was not that sort of a boy. Jacques

accepted everything just as it was; he never imagined things different.

Jacques always said, "Good-day, your majesty," when he came up to his king, and "Good-by, your majesty," when he left him, and bowed low. This time he bowed lower than ever, for he had really not known how much a king was before.

In Paris the boy had heard a great many persons talking against the king; but he was used to that at home, so it did not disturb him. And now at home he heard much more, — he heard very little of anything else indeed. His father and mother began to allow the garden to take care of itself. They often went away for all day, and when they came home talked about a "Republic," and "aristocrats," and the "people," — that is, his mother did most of the talking, but his father empha-

sized things generally. .And when they did not go out, the neighbors and some strangers came to see them, and talked about these same things ; and they made a great deal of noise, and seemed to Jacques not to understand what was going on any better than he did, — except when the king was cursed, which was pretty frequently.

Then one day a crowd of people came, and Jeanne and her husband went away with them. Jeanne said Jacques must stay behind and look after the house. She told him they were going to Paris to take down the king there, and when they came back they would take down the king by the road. She was in one of her fierce moods. Jacques stood in the doorway, sullen and puzzled, with his fists clinched hard, and watched her lead the crowd down the road, singing the Marseillaise.

Jacques remained behind three days, then he went to Paris himself. It took him a day and a half ; and when finally he reached the city, he found it in a strange commotion. In some places it was so quiet he felt the people were all dead, or were hiding ; in others there were crowds making ugly sounds like low thunder. Jacques saw no one anywhere whom he wished to join.

Jacques was walking on one of the bridges across the Seine, when he found an old man looking over the side into the water. He stopped and spoke to him.

"Good-day, sir," he said. But the old man did not answer. "What's the matter here?"

"The world is coming to an end," answered the old man.

"What!" exclaimed Jacques.

"I mean," explained the old man, "that things are turned inside out; and I was wondering how deep the water is here, and how long it would take to get to the bottom."

Jacques did not know what he meant, so he asked him how the king was.

"The king!" The old man's face flamed, but he drew himself up, and his voice was loud and steady, "There is no king! They have taken him, these brutes, and in a few days they will kill him,—kill their king!" He began to tremble with his excitement.

"They shall not kill him!" said Jacques.

"Why not?" asked the old man.

"Because I won't let them," said Jacques; "I will kill them first!"

"You! You're only a boy! Would you lead a mob?" replied the old man.

"Yes," said Jacques.

"Boys have," murmured the old man ;
"but I'm afraid it's too late now, too late,"
he shook his head sadly, — "too late any
way for an old man. How long do you
think it would take to get to the bottom?"
he asked suddenly, pointing down.

"I don't know," said Jacques. "Why?"

"Because I'm thinking of going there."

"What for?"

"Because there I shall find the king."

"He must be crazy," thought Jacques.

"Not now," continued the old man,
"but very soon. I'll wait for him."

"Where?"

"By the throne."

"Down there?" asked Jacques, want-
ing to laugh. "Whose throne is down
there?"

"The great king's throne, who was

nailed to a cross. They will guillotine this one."

Jacques gazed blankly at the bent figure beside him. Did he, he too, know his king?

"Was his crown made of thorns?" he asked.

"Yes," answered the old man, looking down into the water.

"That's my king!" exclaimed Jacques. "His throne is n't down there; it's on the road to my home."

"The boy's an idiot," mumbled the old man. "Poor thing, an idiot."

They both heard a distant shout, and lifted their heads and listened. The sound was repeated, and louder.

"It's the people," said the old man, "going to kill the king, probably. Shall I jump now?" He took hold of the iron

railing to lift himself. "If I don't look out," he murmured, "the king will get there first."

Jacques seized his arm and held him.

"Wait," he said, "wait."

"I have waited," replied the old man, sadly, but without struggling.

The mob was coming toward the bridge; the old man heard their cry.

"They're for the king," he shouted; "I'm glad I didn't jump."

"Are they going to save the king?" asked Jacques, his heart beating faster.

"They're going to try to."

"Will they let me lead them?"

"I don't know; but why not a boy to lead them,—it's better than an old man."

"I want to lead them," cried Jacques.

"Why?" asked the old man. "Poor

idiot, the boy's an idiot," he added under his breath.

"Why, for the king! Come!" and he dragged the old man toward the end of the bridge, where they met the mob.

"Oh, tell them!" commanded Jacques.

The crowd would have swept them down, but that the old man threw up his arms and echoed their cry.

"Let the king live! France, the king, and the people!" and Jacques shouted it with him.

They were a few loyal enthusiasts from the peasantry, making a final effort to save their monarch's head. The old man's voice rang out a shrill falsetto above their half suppressed murmur.

"He wants to be your leader." ("I won't tell them the boy's an idiot," he thought, "they'll never know.") "He is

young, but heloves the king, and is willing to lay down his life for him. Take him! Take him! Give him to the king!" The foremost men lifted Jacques up on their shoulders; the enthusiasm was almost terrible. They shouted "France!" and "The king!"

The old man threw up his hat; it fell over the side into the water. Some one tried to stop it.

"Never mind," the man said; "I'll go and get it presently, myself."

Jacques jumped from the men's shoulders, waving one of their clubs in the air. "Come on!" he shouted, and ran ahead of them, "Come on! The king! France, the king, and the people!" and the crowd followed after him.

For a time they carried everything before them; the sight of the boy, glorious

in his excitement, at their head, roused latent sympathy in many breasts for Louis, and new voices took up the cry with which the others were now so hoarse.

"Life for the king!" they shouted at the corner of the street; and back from the other end came the reply, "Long live our Republic!"

Jacques' eyes were big with anger and hatred. His brain was a wheel of fire. He only faced the crowd for a moment, and then hurried on. He knew no speeches; he could only urge them with the one cry of his heart, "The king! the king!" But his followers needed nothing more than his figure ahead of them. They would have followed him by this time anywhere.

"The king!" Jacques cried, and "The king!" they cried with him. He felt as if

the life of the king was in his very hands. It was a wonderful and awful responsibility.

The two mobs were close together. The leader of those who were tearing down upon Jacques was a woman. He stood face to face with her, and he lifted his arm — but it stayed in the air above his head. It was his mother! He fell back on the men behind him, but they pushed him toward her.

“The king! France and the king!” they cried. He saw some one raise a club to strike.

In an instant he had thrown himself in front of her just as the two mad struggling masses met; and at the moment she knew him for her son, a big stone, from one of her own people, struck with a deathly thud on his young breast; and the boy, without a sound, fell limp against his mother. She

took him up in her two arms, holding him cross-wise close to her body. Both mobs, without their leader, watched aghast, and were unnaturally quiet, — even those behind who could not see.

Jeanne Barot turned and faced her own crowd. Her red cap hung on one side of her falling hair, her dress was ripped at the throat, her eyes had murder in them. “Dogs!” she shrieked; “Dogs! Devils! Dogs!” Words seemed to choke her. Her strong arms were bent up with a mighty tension of their cords to hold the heavy weight of her son.

She turned and faced those she had come to attack.

“I will take his place! Come on!” she yelled; “The king! Long live the king! The king!” And she led them on against

her own people, now amazed and frightened, and scattered them like swallows before the wind. But before night they had collected again, and under a new leader had trodden out from the face of Paris this last remnant of the loyalists, while Jeanne Barot was walking down an empty, ever darkening road with something cold and heavy in her arms.

She buried him herself, alone, beside the tall crucifix; and she made a white bead wreath with her own fingers and placed it over him; and then she went back to Paris, where Citizeness Barot led other mobs of beings to destruction.

And when the servants of the Republic — the priests of the Goddess of Reason — passed along the Barbizon road, they cut down the cross which bore Jacques' king,

and left it lying on the ground where it fell. It did not quite cover the beads of a little wreath which peeped out through the half-grown grass like spring anemones.



